
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 February 2020

by Jonathan Hockley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 March 2020

Appeal A: APP/K0235/W/3235682

1 Harpur Cottages, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedford MK44 2RJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Kieran Dowling against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00982/FUL, dated 30 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is external and internal alterations together with a new rear conservatory.
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Appeal B: APP/K0235/Y/3235684

1 Harpur Cottages, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedford MK44 2RJ

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Kieran Dowling against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00983/LBC, dated 30 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 July 2019.
 - The works proposed are external and internal alterations together with a new rear conservatory.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is allowed and planning permission is granted for external and internal alterations together with a new rear conservatory at 1 Harpur Cottages, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedford MK44 2RJ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/00982/FUL, dated 30 April 2019, subject to the conditions set out at the end of my decision.
2. Appeal B is allowed and listed building consent is granted for external and internal alterations together with a new rear conservatory at 1 Harpur Cottages, Church Hill, Ravensden, Bedford MK44 2RJ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 19/00983/LBC dated 30 April 2019, subject to the conditions set out at the end of my decision.

Procedural Matters

3. During the course of the appeal the new Bedford Local Plan was adopted, on 15 January 2020¹. Previous policies from the 2002 Local Plan referred to in the decision notices for these appeals have been superseded by policies within this

¹ Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030

new Local Plan. Both parties were given the opportunity to comment on this change in the development plan.

Main Issue

4. The main issue for both these cases is whether the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historical interest of the listed building.

Reasons

5. 1 Harpur Cottages is Grade II listed as part of a terraced group with the adjacent properties. To the right of No 1 lies the smaller No 3 Harpur Cottages, with a former public house attached to the left. The thatched 18th century cottages are timber framed with brick noggin. Nos 1 & 3 are white/ivory colour washed rough cast, whereas the former pub is faced in red brick. The properties are single storey with attics, and there are 7 small half dormers along the row. The former pub also has two gabled porches to front. There are 4 chimney stacks along the ridge of the terrace, with the chimney to No 1 having had a former stack removed. The listing notes that the terrace has an 8 room plan overall. No 1 has a baffle entry and a 2 cell plan form. The significance of the listed building derives largely from its traditional vernacular form, layout, and appearance, particularly on its façade.
6. Policy 41S of the new Local Plan states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. Policy CP23 of the Core Strategy² states that development will be required to protect and where appropriate enhance listed buildings. The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features or architectural interest it possesses.
7. The proposal seeks a variety of alterations to the front and rear elevations and to the inside of the listed building. A new chimney is proposed to be set adjacent to the existing stack, along with a new hardwood conservatory to the rear, with an existing plastic one to be removed. This would be sited on the right-hand side of the cottage as opposed to the left hand side where the existing conservatory lies. Corresponding openings are proposed to be altered, and internally alterations are proposed to the plan form at ground and attic level, including new rear dormers.
8. The reopening of the fireplace in the left hand kitchen/study of the property, and new chimney stack would enhance the listed building by reintroducing historic features, with the removal of the existing reasonably modern partitions on the right side which form the bathroom also enhancing the property by restoring its former ground floor plan form. The proposed new opening to the new conservatory would involve the removal of two windows and insertion of an opening and a smaller narrower window. On my site visit it was evident that these windows are steel and uPVC respectively, and that the material underneath the larger, steel, window is brickwork and not original and does not contain original timber frame. As such these works would not cause harm to the historic fabric of the building. The removal of reasonably modern brickwork beneath the existing kitchen window would also not cause harm.

²Core Strategy & Rural Issues Plan, April 2008, Bedford Borough Council

9. Both parties agree that the current stair arrangement is not original; I agree with this view and noted on my visit the modern enclosure and false framing used in the construction of this enclosure. The proposal seeks to move these stairs closer to the hall. Plans indicate that the risers for such proposed stairs would not be visible through the adjacent window, and therefore while people using the stairs may well be visible such an effect would be fleeting and would not in my view cause harm. What is not clear however is whether there are any original floorboards which would need to be removed for the new opening/apron at attic level.
10. At the attic level a new small partition and door is proposed to be located to section off the second bedroom; also proposed is a replacement bathroom. The insertion of a bathroom and bedroom partition at attic level would not cause harm in my view; of more importance historically is the reintroduction of the ground floor cell form that the removal of the existing bathroom would engender. Potentially however required pipework for the proposed bathroom may require alterations to historic floorboards.
11. I consider that the rear of the cottages is of less significance than the front elevation, noting that there have been various alterations and extensions to the rear of the former public house over time. The Council note that the existing conservatory was not present at the time of listing and therefore cannot be considered as mitigation. I agree with this but consider that notwithstanding this the removal of the existing uPVC conservatory structure would undoubtedly be of benefit. The new proposed conservatory would be constructed in hardwood which subject to details would be appropriate on such an elevation. While the proposed conservatory would be larger in scale than the existing structure, it would remain less wide than the plan form of the cottage and would fill an existing level gap before the ground of the garden rises and would not cause harm by virtue of its scale or volume to the special interest of the listed building.
12. I am also of the view that the new dormers to the rear, again subject to conditions, would be designed and sited in such a way so as to be appropriate to the form and structure of the overall building. Any loss to historic fabric would be minimal and the dormers, provided they were appropriately detailed would not cause harm to the listed building.
13. Summing up then, I find some of the proposed alterations to be neutral, some to potentially cause some harm and some that would enhance the listed building. Specifically, I consider that the benefits of the new chimney stack and re-introduction of the ground floor cell form would balance out any potential harm which may be caused by effects on any historic fabric by the new proposed staircase and bathroom. As such I consider that the scheme would not cause harm in the round and would preserve the listed building and any features or architectural interest it possesses.
14. I am therefore satisfied that the proposed works would have a neutral effect which would retain the building's essential qualities, and that the special architectural and historic interest of this listed building would be preserved. As such, I find no conflict with Local Plan policy 41S, Core Strategy policy CP23, or with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions and Conclusion – Appeals A and B

15. I have imposed the standard conditions relating to time for implementation on both decisions, as well as compliance with plans as this provides certainty. On Appeal B I have also imposed conditions requiring full details of external materials, internal alterations, windows, doors, and the conservatory for the proposal to be approved in writing before works commence, in the interests of the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. Such conditions are as recommended by the Council in their statement of case.
16. To summarise I consider that the proposal would preserve the special architectural and historical interest of the Grade II listed building. Therefore, for the reasons given above I conclude that the appeals should be allowed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR

CONDITIONS SCHEDULE OF 2 CONDITIONS FOR APPEAL A

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, Block Plan 3 April 2019, Proposed Plans 2 (April 2019).

CONDITIONS SCHEDULE OF 6 CONDITIONS FOR APPEAL B

- 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
- 2) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Location Plan, Block Plan 3 (April 2019), Proposed Plans 2 (April 2019).
- 3) No works shall commence until full details of the external materials to be used (to include walls, roof, doors, windows and external gutters, vents, flues and pipework) have been provided for inspection (on site where possible) and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4) No works shall commence until detailed drawings of the new windows (including dormer windows) and new doors have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such drawings shall include sections showing the position of the windows / doors in relation to the face of the wall, depth of reveal together with arch and sill details. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 5) No works shall commence until detailed drawings of the new conservatory have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 6) No works shall commence until detailed drawings of all the internal alterations (including the staircase) have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.