
Appeal Decisions

by Claire Searson MSc PGDip BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 15th May 2020

Appeal A Ref: APP/P1940/W/20/3246593

21 Harefield Road, Rickmansworth WD3 1LZ

- 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 and Mrs Lowe against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/2148/FUL, dated 3 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is single storey side and rear extensions, minor internal alterations.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/P1940/Y/20/3246594

21 Harefield Road, Rickmansworth WD3 1LZ

- 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 and Mrs Lowe against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/2149/LBC, dated 3 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2019.
 - The works proposed are single storey side and rear extensions, minor internal alterations.
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Decision – Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Decision – Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

3. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.
4. In response to travel restrictions currently in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic I consider that these appeals can be determined without the need for a physical site visit. This is because I have been able to reach a decision based on the information already available, supplemented by additional photographic evidence supplied by the appellant. Both the appellant and the Council have agreed to the appeals proceeding on this basis.

5. Planning permission and listed building consent have been granted at the site for a single storey rear infill extension, a single storey side extension and internal alterations.¹ Details of the approved scheme have been provided. The current appeals seek consent for the same work, but with a change in the design and footprint of the single storey side extension. My decision therefore focusses on this changed element.

Main Issue

6. The main issues for both of the appeals are whether the development and works would preserve the grade II listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

7. No 21 Harefield Road is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling which is of red brick construction with a tiled roof, an external chimney stack to the flank gable and rear gabled projection. No 25 (attached) has a stucco finish with front dormer windows and together these form a grade II listed pair. Originally they formed a single timber framed agricultural building dating from the 16th Century. This was converted into a dwelling in the late 17th/early 18th Century and then later subdivided into 2 properties during the 19th Century. There is a rear gabled projection to No 21 which is a 20th Century construct, but has been sympathetically designed in terms of materials and detailing.
8. Nos 21 & 25 are positioned fronting Harefield Road, but are located at a slight angle to the highway with a north facing aspect. The neighbouring property, No 19 Harefield Road, is a detached modern bungalow which occupies a corner plot between Harefield Road and Sherfield Avenue. The boundary between the appeal property and No 19 is angled and splayed and comprises of a modern close-boarded and trellis fencing. No 19 has been extended towards the listed building and is positioned in proximity to the shared boundary with No 21. The rear garden serving the appeal property is generous in size and due to changes in land levels, the garden is set higher than the dwelling.
9. Accordingly, the special interest of the building relates to its historic interest as a building which has changed and evolved significantly over time, from a rural agricultural building to domestic dwellings. It also has architectural interest in terms of its timber framing, brick and stucco encasing and I note the listing description states that Nos 21 and 25 form a good example of a building in a formally rural area being adapted to changes in agriculture and housing needs over a long period and yet preserving significant amounts of the original structure.
10. As previously referenced, the development and works in contention between parties relate to a side extension. This would be a single storey brick built structure with a flat roof. It would be attached to the rear gabled extension to the dwelling and would form a utility room and WC, accessed from the kitchen. It would have a splayed footprint along the boundary with No 19, with the narrower part visible from the front elevation and the streetscene.
11. The architectural language of Nos 21 and 25 has changed and altered over time and there is limited continuity between the properties, including across the rear. The proposed extension has been purposely designed to match the

¹ Reference 19/1413/FUL and 19/1414/LBC granted 23 September 2019.

consented rear infill extension which would be single storey with a flat roof. I am also mindful that the property is multi-phased and, in this regard, the addition of a further modern extension would form a continuation of the evolution of the building and its architectural vocabulary.

12. However, the property has previously been developed and expanded in a simple and unassuming manner with a typical rectangular plan form of the original core, then a further rectangular rear projection. The addition of a splayed side extension, would be incongruous to the simple form and evolution of the property and would jarr with the footprint and proportionality of the building.
13. This effect would be compounded by the flat roof arrangement particularly when viewed from the rear of the property where the width of the side extension would be at its greatest. The extension would have a significant horizontal emphasis and the general proportionality of the rear elevation would be lost.
14. Moreover, it would also provide further enclosure between the listed building and the modern property at No 19, giving a crowding effect from this property which lies within the setting of No 21. As a modern dwelling, the presence of a splayed extension to No 19 would not justify a similar treatment at No 21.
15. The approved scheme for a side extension would have a smaller rectangular footprint with a lean-to roof structure. This would extend towards the eaves of the rear 2 storey extension to the property, and would thus be higher than the scheme now before me. However, it has a simple, traditional design and footprint and thus I do not consider the appeal scheme would necessarily read as a more subordinate addition than the approved extension, in spite of its lower height. The change in levels across the site would also do little to offset the harm I have identified.
16. I accept that there would be limited visibility of the extension from the public vantage points, but I note that the statutory duties around listed buildings² apply even if a scheme or element is neither prominent nor publicly visible.
17. The works would affect only part of the listed building and therefore in terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the harm caused to the significance of the asset would be less than substantial. Paragraph 196 of the Framework states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
18. However, the property is currently in use as a family home and any benefits arising from the works would largely be private, relating to the occupants of the premises. It is claimed that the extension would provide an incentive for active conservation of the listed property but limited explanation has been provided to support this. It is also unclear to me why the extant scheme would not also achieve this.
19. I therefore find that there would be insufficient public benefit to offset the identified harm or outweigh the special regard to be had to its preservation under the Act. The development and works would thus fail to accord with the

² S16(2) and s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation areas) Act 1990

Framework which gives great weight to heritage assets, and seeks to conserve assets in a manner appropriate to their significance.

20. Overall, taking into account the particular circumstances and having carefully considered all the evidence, I conclude that the works would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed building. The development would also conflict with Policies CP1 and CP2 of the Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy (2011) and Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Development Management Policies Document (2013). Together these policies seek to protect and enhance heritage assets and the historic environment as part of sustainable development, preserve the quality of the built environment and secure extensions which would not adversely affect special architectural or historic interest.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both of the appeals should be dismissed.

C Searson

INSPECTOR