



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 4 January 2021

by Graham Chamberlain BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/20/3255472

Thatched Cottage, High Street, Widdington, Essex CB11 3SQ

- 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 Ms Warr against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/20/0852/HHF, dated 26 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Minor extension to existing modern entrance porch. Rooflights in existing single storey rear extension. New door and windows in modern garage associated with new use as amenity space'.
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Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/Y/20/3255474

Thatched Cottage, High Street, Widdington, Essex CB11 3SQ

- 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 Ms Warr against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/20/0853/LB, dated 26 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 June 2020.
 - The works proposed are described as 'Minor extension to existing modern entrance porch. Rooflights in existing single storey rear extension. New door and windows in modern garage associated with new use as amenity space'.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A – The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a minor extension to the existing modern entrance porch, the insertion of rooflights in the existing single storey rear extension and a new door and windows in the garage at Thatched Cottage, High Street, Widdington, Essex CB11 3SQ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: UTT/20/0852/HHF, dated 26 March 2020, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.
2. Appeal B - The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for a minor extension to the existing modern entrance porch, the insertion of rooflights in the existing single storey rear extension and a new door and windows in the garage at Thatched Cottage, High Street, Widdington, Essex CB11 3SQ, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: UTT/20/0853/LB, dated 26 March 2020, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are: 1) Whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building known as Thatched Cottage or any features of

special architectural interest that it possesses; and 2) The effect of the proposal on the setting of the Widdington Conservation Area.

Reasons

Whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building

4. Thatched Cottage was listed in 1980 and is a timber framed dwelling probably dating from the 17th Century. The oldest part of the building is parallel with the High Street and is distinguished by the pargeting to the plaster work at ground floor level. The building is thatched save for the northern end where a single storey extension has been awkwardly raised to create a two-storey tiled element. There is a collection of outbuildings to the rear with the narrower gable ended brick outbuilding likely to have earlier origins than the hipped double garage extension.
5. Accordingly, the significance of the listed building, in so far as it relates to these appeals, is primarily its evidential and historic value as an altered vernacular style domestic building. It also has a simple rural charm that fortuitously provides an aesthetic value.
6. The proposed porch extension would reflect the form and material finish of the existing porch by being a simple rendered lean-to addition. The slight set back and lower ridge and eaves height would provide a sense of subservience and a recessive appearance. The porch extension would also be sited off a rear range and therefore away from the principal High Street elevation, which would be unaffected. This would preserve the hierarchy of the building. The position of windows in the building is not uniform save for the High Street elevation and therefore the loss of the window to facilitate the porch extension would not harmfully disrupt the pattern of window placement. As such, the extension would preserve the aesthetic value of the building.
7. The proposed porch extension would result in the blocking up of a ground floor single glazed timber casement window that is of a 19th Century style. The appellant's Heritage Statement suggests that the two-storey western projection of the building is modern despite its historic appearance and thatched roof, and therefore the window in question is a modern casement. A decision notice and drawings relating to this approval have not been submitted, but the appellant refers to an application number. Moreover, the list description does not refer to the western range, it is not evident on historic maps, the join between the older part of the building described in the list description and the western range is evident and the western range has modern details, such as smooth rendering over the plinth. Significantly, the Council have not disputed the appellant's proposition that the western range is modern or sought to argue that the window in question is historic fabric of significance. Thus, the evidence before me would suggest the casement window is modern and therefore its loss would not harm the character and integrity of the listed building or its evidential and historic value.
8. The Council have not raised any concerns regarding the realignment of the door from the porch into the kitchen or the insertion of roof lights into the existing single storey extension, even though the latter would result in overtly modern insertions into the roof scape of the building. I have no reason to disagree. The concerns regarding the potential for a flue in the porch extension are unfounded because the proposed drawings do not show a flue or vent.

9. The double garage would retain a simple subservient appearance despite the works proposed to facilitate its conversion to a home gym/games room - the insertion of two floor to ceiling windows and a solid door to match an existing one - because the existing functional double doors would be retained to the front and the simple overall form and modest proportions would remain unaltered. Moreover, the large windows would face away from the listed building and therefore they would have little impact on views towards the historic structure. As such, the works would not be too domestic, amount to an over development of the site, result in the garage appearing as a separate dwelling or interfere with the way Thatched Cottage is experienced as a vernacular cottage in an established historic street scene.
10. In conclusion, the proposal would preserve and thus not harm the significance and special interest of the listed building. Accordingly, the proposal would adhere to the expectations in Sections 66(1) and 16(1) of The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the 'Act'), Paragraphs 193 and 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and Policy ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 (LP), which seeks to secure proposals that protect the special characteristics of listed buildings.

The effect on the setting of the Widdington Conservation Area (CA)

11. The appeal site is located outside but adjacent to the CA, which is focussed on the High Street and Church Lane. These are historic streets flanked by a rich mix of period buildings radiating out from the central green. The CA derives much of its special character, appearance and significance from the historic, evidential and aesthetic value that can be gleaned from the village street scape and layout and the authenticity of the period architecture.
12. The porch extension would be discreetly tucked away behind the main range of the building and therefore it would not be prominent in, or injurious to, views from the High Street. It would be princely visible from a short section of Hamel Way but for reasons already given it would be subservient and recessive in appearance. It would therefore preserve the street scape of the CA and its character, appearance and significance. Similarly, the other works proposed would not be overtly conspicuous from the High Street/CA and consequently they would also have a preserving effect. Thus, the proposal would adhere to Policies S7, GEN2, and ENV1 of the LP, which seek to secure development of an appropriate standard of design that preserve conservation areas.

Conditions and Conclusions

13. I have had regard to the advice in the Planning Practice Guide and the conditions suggested by the Council. It is necessary in the interests of precision and safeguarding the listed building and its setting that the approved aspects of the proposal are undertaken in accordance with the submitted drawings and in matching materials. The drawings annotate the roof lights as being conservation roof lights so a separate condition in this regard is unnecessary.
14. In conclusion, for the reasons given the appeals are allowed.

Graham Chamberlain
INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

Appeal A

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall commence not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 19/197/01, 19/197/02, 19/197/03, 19/197/04, 19/197/05, 19/197/06 and 19/197/07
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces and joinery of the development hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.

Appeal B

- 1) The works hereby authorised shall commence not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
- 2) The works hereby authorised shall be undertaken only in accordance with the following approved plans: 19/197/01, 19/197/02, 19/197/03, 19/197/04, 19/197/05, 19/197/06 and 19/197/07
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces and joinery of the works hereby permitted shall match those of the existing building.