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## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 5 January 2021

**by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 13 January 2021**

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### **Appeal A: APP/Y3940/W/20/3257698** **Chestnut Cottage, Hilcott, Pewsey SN9 6LE**

- 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 Campbell-Slight against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
  - The application Ref 20/02136/FUL, dated 21 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 June 2020.
  - The development proposed is the replacement of a conservatory with a single storey extension.
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### **Appeal B: APP/Y3940/Y/20/3257696** **Chestnut Cottage, Hilcott, Pewsey SN9 6LE**

- 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 Campbell-Slight against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
  - The application Ref 20/02720/LBC, dated 21 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 June 2020.
  - The works proposed are the replacement of a conservatory with a single storey extension.
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### **Decision**

1. The appeals are dismissed.

### **Main Issues**

2. The first main issue is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of Chestnut Cottage which is Grade II listed.
3. Although not cited in the Council's reason for refusal I have had regard to the duty under section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and, in light of the evidence before me, consider this should be a further main issue. Both parties have been consulted on this and their views taken into consideration.
4. Consequently, linked to the above main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hilcott Conservation Area.

### **Reasons**

5. Chestnut Cottage is a 17<sup>th</sup> Century detached brick cottage set within a rural hamlet setting. The front two storey section of the property is one of the oldest parts of the building and is well preserved; particularly the front elevation. It

retains many historic details such as a half hipped thatched roof, and red brick elevations with ashlar quoins and a stone mid-wall string. The front and rear elevations of this part of the building also contain leaded mullion windows set within stone surrounds, above which sit brick relieving arches. These elements have historic value in that they show the craftsmanship and architectural tastes of the period from which they date. They also provide aesthetic value giving the building visual interest. These features therefore contribute greatly to the significance of the building.

6. The property is located within the Hilcott Conservation Area. Hilcott is a rural hamlet, as noted above, containing a number of historic buildings, many of which are of a similar vernacular to Chestnut Cottage; in particular, there is a predominance of thatch. Chestnut Cottage, being one of a number of historic buildings of note which contribute to the character and appearance of the hamlet therefore contributes to the significance of the conservation area as a whole.
7. There is an existing, fairly modern, conservatory to one side of the property and it is proposed to replace this with a brick, single storey extension. The extension would have approximately double the footprint of the conservatory and would extend beyond the rear elevation of the front two storey section of the cottage. Due to an existing rear projection on the other side of the cottage, at the end of which is a further, angled extension, the proposed extension would effectively enclose the main rear elevation. Consequently, when viewed from the rear, part of the historic and architectural interest of the building, such as the red brick and a ground floor window, would be obscured.
8. The extension also features shuttered coach-house style doors in the side, but such details do not currently exist on the property nor is there anything before me to suggest they were previously a feature. Whilst I note the appellant's argument that the extension is designed deliberately to be out of character so as not to be confused with the more historic parts of the building, detailing such as this would be misleading and would detract from its historic use as a rural cottage.
9. I also consider that a tiled roof, as proposed on the extension, would also be out of character, conscious as I am of the predominance of thatch in the area, that thatch has been extensively used on the cottage save for the conservatory, and that a lean-to which previously occupied the site of the conservatory was also thatched. Furthermore, I note the reference to thatch in the Hilcott Conservation Area Designation Statement as being '*dominant*' and '*...characteristic of the simple roof forms that epitomise vernacular building tradition in the Vale of Pewsey.*'
10. For these reasons the proposal would detract from the special architectural and historic interest of the cottage. Although the site is well screened from public view by planting, this cannot be considered a permanent feature, and, in any event, the extension would be visible from the highway to the front through the access. Whilst it could be said that the proposed brick extension would be more sympathetic to the historic character of the cottage than the existing conservatory, the proposed extension would be higher and therefore more dominant and more visible. For this reason and given my concerns over the design of the roof above, I find the proposal would also neither preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

11. In addition to the above the proposal would conflict with Policies 57 and 58 of the adopted Wiltshire Core Strategy which requires development to conserve and be sympathetic to the historic environment. The harm I have found would be 'less than substantial' for the purposes of para 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) given the scale of works and their range of impact. Nevertheless, great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to less than substantial harm to its significance.
12. As per para 196 of the Framework where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm this should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The appellant argues that the principal elevation of the cottage would be restored but there is little before me to suggest the design of the proposal has a similar appearance to that of a previous lean-to here. There is also nothing to suggest that it extended beyond the main rear elevation of the property. Therefore, these matters do not weigh heavily in favour of the scheme.
13. I also find little to commend the design of the extension in terms of it having regard to the local vernacular; much of the detailing in the historic part of the property is omitted from the extension such as the thatch roof and ashlar quoins. Consequently, I find that the public benefits do not outweigh the harm that I have found.

## **Conclusion**

14. I have had regard to all matters raised, including the appellant's arguments in relation to percentage increases in footprint, but these matters have not been determinative in reaching my findings above. I have also had regard to the two properties referenced in the appellant's statement, but these are not directly comparable in design terms to the proposal before me. Consequently, I find that the harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the cottage, and harm to the Hilcott Conservation Area, and the resulting conflict with the development plan, is not outweighed by the other material considerations in this case.
15. The appeals are dismissed.

*Hayley Butcher*

INSPECTOR