
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2021

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J2210/D/20/3263294

12 Westbere Lane, Westbere, Canterbury, Kent, CT2 0HH.

- 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 J. Croucher against the decision of Canterbury City Council.
 - The application Ref CA/20/01621, dated 28 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 16 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is ground floor and lower ground floor rear extension
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal site is located in the Westbere Conservation Area. I am required therefore to take account of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended which states that, with respect to buildings or other land in a conservation area, special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. Therefore, although not a reason for refusal, I shall nevertheless, as I am required to do, consider this as one of the main issues in this appeal

Main Issues

3. I consider the main issues to be the effect of the proposal on the special character of 12 Westbere Lane, a locally listed building, and whether the development would serve to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Westbere Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The appeal property, 12 Westbere Lane, is one of a terrace of Victorian cottages, known as Cecil Cottages that date from 1881. It is a locally listed property located in the Westbere Conservation Area.
5. While the cottages appear as single storey with roof space accommodation from the street, from the rear they are two-storey with roof space accommodation. As I saw there are a variety of later modest subservient and unassuming single-storey rear extensions.
6. The significance of the cottage relates to the history of its development, its vernacular design, materials, detailing along with its relationship to the adjacent dwellings in the terrace.

7. The appellant proposes a two-storey full width rear extension. The extension as designed would have a strikingly dramatic double gabled, pitched roof, the ridge-line of which would be set down just below the eaves line of the cottages. In addition a pitched tiled mono pitch canopy is proposed to project from the rear wall of the extension over a wide patio door system. Accordingly while the extension might be considered as subservient in terms of its height it would, due to its design, appear as a prominent addition in relation to the existing and approved rear additions to the neighbouring cottages.
8. The proposed extension would, due to its two-storey height, full width and complex fussy design appear as an overbearing and incongruous addition. It would therefore cause significant harm to the architectural integrity of the host property and the terrace of cottages of which it is part.
9. To my mind, if allowed, it would in turn lead to the erosion of the significance of the property and thereby the special character of the locally listed building. However, given that the extension is to the rear and having regard to the utilitarian design of the neighbouring extensions I consider that this extension would nevertheless have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
10. I appreciate, given the modest size of the existing cottage, that the extension would provide much needed enhanced residential accommodation. However, given the harm that has been identified to this undesignated heritage asset I nevertheless conclude that the public benefits would not outweigh this harm and thereby the conflict that the proposal would have with the objectives of Policies DBE3, DBE6, HE1, HE4, and HE5 of the Canterbury District Local Plan (Adopted July 2017) and the National Planning Policy Framework as they relate to, amongst other things, the quality of development and the need to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of locally listed buildings.

Conclusions

11. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR