



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2021

by C J Leigh BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/D/21/3273731 Old Manse, The Street, High Easter, CM1 4QS

- 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 Paul Johnson against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/20/3087/HHF, dated 25 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is to extend the existing garage forward with a single storey pitched roof, and to build a stand-alone cart-lodge to the front of the property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the High Easter Conservation Area, and the significance of the property as a non-designated heritage asset. A further issue is the effect on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers.

Reasons

Conservation area and non-designated heritage asset

3. Under s72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 I have a duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the High Easter Conservation Area.
 4. The Area encompasses the main road that runs through the village, where properties front the street and vary in age, which evidently displays the evolution of the village over time. Some buildings are sited close to the street whilst others are set back, and this change in siting is important in contributing to the character of the village as a settlement that has a variety of spacing to buildings. The general appearance of buildings along The Street is of modest houses, but this is interspersed by larger buildings of more grandeur or of different scale and form: this includes The Chantry to the east of the appeal site, Maples and Elm House to the north west, and Old Manse itself.
 5. These elements of the village all contribute to the significance of the Area as a designated heritage asset. The appeal property has been identified by the Council as a non-designated heritage asset, being a building that sees a 19th
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Century two storey cross-wing and a single storey neo-vernacular hall. This form and scale of the building is still very evident, with the large tiled clay tile roof an attractive feature of the building; a modern porch extension to the building is of modest scale and sensitive design that does not detract from the simple form of the building. The significance of Old Manse as a non-designated heritage asset derives from these features.

6. The proposed works would see an extension towards The Street at the western end of the property, and a detached outbuilding between the property and The Street at the eastern end. The scale and siting of this development would notably change the appearance, scale and architecture of the building. The simple form of the original hall with the cross-wing would be obscured by the position and height of the outbuilding, whilst the depth, height and projection of the extension would appreciably disrupt the plan form and appreciation of the hall. This would be seen in views of the house and the setting of the house, which are clearly visible from public viewpoints.
7. The forward projection of the proposed works would further disrupt the balance between the property and its position on the site. By filling more of the front area of the plot the impression would be of a crowded building (and outbuilding) on the site, so reducing the sense of space to this part of the street. Views of the side elevation of The Chantry would be reduced which, due to grander appearance to that property, would be to the detriment of the Area.
8. These matters mean the character of the Conservation Area would be harmed and the works would not be appropriate to the building, which is a non-designated heritage asset. Thus, the proposed development would conflict with Policies S3, GEN2, H8 and ENV1 of the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005 which, amongst other matters, aim to ensure new development, including residential extensions, is of a design compatible with the scale, form, layout and appearance of surrounding buildings and the existing building to be extended, and that the character and appearance of conservation areas is preserved or enhanced.
9. There would as a consequence of the above be harm to the significance of the Conservation Area as a designated heritage asset and I attach considerable importance and weight to this harm. That harm would be less than substantial and so, in accordance with paragraph 201 of the National Planning Policy Framework, must be considered against the public benefit of the proposal.
10. I recognise the improvements and renovation the appellant has undertaken to the property in the past, and that the current proposals are to provide more space for storage of vehicles and cycles. However, these are private benefits that are not dependent on the current proposals to alter the house which, for the reasons given, I concur with the Council are unacceptable. I note the extension would screen views of the side elevation of the modern house 'Chuckles', but the degree of harm from this extension – as expressed earlier – outweighs any benefit from screening. I therefore conclude that there are no public benefits arising from the proposed works that would outweigh the harm identified.
11. Paragraph 203 of the Framework states that, if a proposal has a harmful effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, then a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. For similar reasons to that given above

with regard to the designated heritage asset, I cannot see any benefits that outweigh the harm to the building and so my conclusions remain the same.

Other considerations

12. The proposed extension to the property would sit along the side elevation of Chuckles, to the west. The outlook from the rear of that property is currently across its garden, the set-back garage to Chuckles, and the existing side elevation of Old Manse. The further amount of building that would occur near this boundary as a result of the appeal proposal would not be substantially greater than the existing building in this area and, together with the distance retained to the boundary and to Chuckles itself, would not be imposing upon outlook or levels of light.
13. The appellant has drawn my attention to garages and car ports at certain other properties on The Street, which I saw at my site visit. These are generally set on their plot in a manner that does not obscure the host property, or provide them a greater degree of spacing around them which means they do not appear out of scale with the plot, house or wider area. I have determined this appeal on its own merits and these examples do not change my conclusion on the main issue.
14. For the reasons given the appeal is therefore dismissed.

C J Leigh

INSPECTOR