The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 September 2022

by Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 October 2022.

Appeal Ref: APP/M2270/D/22/3296557
Stable cottage, Cranbrook Road, Goudhurst, Kent, TN17 1DY.

- 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 Gladwell-Curd against the decision of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
- The application Ref 21/03897/FULL, dated 19 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 25 January 2022.
- The development proposed is described as *demolition of an existing ground floor extension; replacement two-storey side extension with associated internal alterations; alterations to southern boundary treatment. Close boarded fence to be replaced with 2m high brick wall.*

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider the main issues to be the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic character of Stable Cottage a non-designated heritage asset, the farmstead and the setting of the nearby listed building Jetwells, listed grade II.

Reasons

3. Stable Cottage, the former coach house and barn to Jetwells, a grade II listed building to the east. It is now a detached residential dwelling. As advised by the Council it is not curtilage listed with Jetwells, but nevertheless it is considered to be Non-Designated Heritage Asset.

4. The appellants propose the demolition of an existing, late 20th century, single storey extension and the construction of a two-storey side extension. A new 2.0 metre high brick wall to replace the existing close boarded fence is proposed to the southern boundary.

5. As I observed the property has, to a certain extent, due to various extensions and alterations over time lost much of the identity of the original historic buildings. Accordingly, further extensions and alterations need to be considered very carefully so as not to completely denude this non-designated heritage assets significance.

6. The single storey extension is of limited architectural merit with its pitched fascia flat roof design and awkward junction with Stable Cottage. Therefore, its removal is to be welcomed.

7. However, the proposed replacement two-storey addition is considerably larger in scale. The two small dormers in the southern roof slope and one large dormer to the northern roof slope along with its steep pitched roof proposed add considerably to the overall mass of the extension. Notwithstanding the overall size of the property, due to its height the extension would be a prominent element in the overall composition of the coach house and barn as extended, thereby competing for prominence with the host property.

8. Further, the hip to the western end of the main roof would be altered to a gable to accommodate the new extension. This would fundamentally alter the three-dimensional form and appearance of what I believe to be part of the original building. In turn this would result in the loss of an attractive small high-level window set under the hipped roof projection.

9. Furthermore, the scheme drawings suggest that the new extension would have an expressed timber frame to match the adjacent two-storey element of the original buildings. In my judgement, this detailing would detract from the unique identity of the original buildings and further serve to visually diminish their special architectural and historic character.

10. I also note that uPVC casements are proposed set timber sub-frames. Although, a small detail the introduction of modern uPVC windows due to their detail design and finish would add to the harm to the non-designated heritage asset.

11. The proposed extension, given the mature landscape setting and being on the far side of the property would not impact on the setting of Jetwells located to the east of the appeal property. However, on balance I consider that it would, for the reasons given, cause harm to this non-designated heritage asset.

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets, which include non-designated heritage assets. It draws a distinction between substantial harm and less than substantial harm to such an asset. For the latter, which applies here, the test is that the harm should be weighed against public benefits, including securing the optimum viable use.

13. The proposed extension might well as suggested by the appellants, by providing a new first floor master bedroom, an additional ground floor bedroom and family snug provide additional habitable accommodation to enhance the building for modern family living. However, given the existing level of accommodation I give limited weight to the suggestion that this further extension would necessarily help to secure the future use and functioning of this non-designated heritage. However, the development would provide some limited economic benefit. Nevertheless, given the harm that has been identified I conclude that the public benefits would not outweigh this harm, or the conflict that development would have to the objectives of the Framework and Policy EN1 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Plan (Adopted March 2006), Policy CP4 of the Tunbridge Wells Borough Local Development Framework-Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Adopted June) 2010 as they relate to, amongst other things, the quality of development and

requirement for great weight to be given to the conservation of heritage assets.

Other Matters

14. Whilst I am sympathetic to the fact that the appeal proposal is a redesign, taking into account issues raised during the consideration of the original scheme design, I can only assess the current proposal on the basis of the design before me.

Conclusions

15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the support of the neighbours to the west of the property, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR