



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2022

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/D/22/3302146

1 Chapel Cottages, Chapel Loke, Lessingham, NORWICH, NR12 0TD

- 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 J Ford against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref PF/21/2896, dated 26 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is the construction of ground- and first-floor extensions and alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the construction of ground- and first-floor extensions and alterations at 1 Chapel Cottages, Chapel Loke, Lessingham, NORWICH, NR12 0TD, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PF/21/2896, dated 26 October 2021, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 826 10A
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

Procedural Matters

2. The address given on the application form and plans refers to Chapel Lane. It would appear that the term Chapel Loke is more appropriate and this is the address I have used above.
3. There were revisions made to the plans during the consideration of the application by the Council. These relate, amongst other things, to the use of white painted render to the elevations which would match the existing external surfaces of the house. I have covered this issue in the conditions attached.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this case are the effects of the extensions on:
 - The character and appearance of the area around the junction of Chapel Loke and Ingham Road, and

- The amenities enjoyed by the users of the Lessingham Methodist Church by way of light and outlook.

Reasons

5. No 1 Chapel Cottages is a semi-detached cottage situated on the north side of Chapel Loke, a rough-surfaced lane off Ingham Road. It is a two-storey dwelling with a small single-storey side extension. The house has a hipped roof and the existing side extension has a mono-pitch roof. The property has a side boundary with Lessingham Methodist Chapel, which is situated on a corner plot at the junction of Ingham Road with Chapel Loke. The proposed extensions would involve the construction of a two-storey side extension with a hipped roof that would replace the existing single-storey extension and project further back from the rear elevation of the property by a little under 3 metres. It would also include a small single-storey rear element formed by extending the existing roof slope down with a cat-slide appearance.
6. Policy EN4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy (CS) indicates that development should be designed to a high quality, and that design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character and quality of an area will not be acceptable. Extensions and alterations to existing buildings will be expected to have regard to the North Norfolk Design Guide (DG) and be suitably designed for the context within which they are set.
7. The DG indicates that the scale of an extension should ensure that the architectural character of the original building is not harmed and remains dominant. In addition, extensions should use forms, detailing and materials which are compatible with the original building, and should be sited and designed to avoid any loss of light or privacy to adjoining properties or overshadowing or overbearing effects.
8. The Council contends that the proposed extensions, by virtue of their overall scale, height, form and siting, are considered to constitute an incongruous form of development which would be unacceptable in design terms and fail to have regard to the character and appearance of the pair of semi-detached cottages, and would not preserve or enhance the character of the property within the surrounding locality. In addition, it is considered that the proposed two-storey side/rear extension would also have an unsatisfactory relationship with the adjacent chapel building due to its height, projection and close proximity to the shared boundary and the presence of large windows along the chapel's side elevation, resulting in an overbearing impact and a loss of privacy and light.
9. The appellant indicates that the proposed extensions were reduced in scale from those of the original application drawings, such that they would be subordinate to the host building, and that the revised cladding would be painted to match the existing building. Moreover, only one window out of eight in the adjacent chapel would be affected by the proposals, and the hipped roof form proposed in the revised plans would reduce overshadowing. Finally, it is contended that the chapel has only limited usage.

Character and appearance

10. The main element of each of the pair of semi-detached houses, of which No 1 is a part, appear to be of similar design. No 1 also has a small single-storey side extension, around 2 metres wide, running along most of the side of the

house. The adjoining No 2 has a large, two-storey side extension including a drive-through car port and accommodation above. This side extension appears to be around the same width as the original main house and, although it is set back a little from the front elevation and down a little from the main roof ridge, in terms of scale, it appears as a dominating feature.

11. The proposed extension at No 1 would be only around 2 metres wide. It would extend some 3 metres beyond the existing rear elevation with a hipped roof set a little below the level of the existing ridge, and with an eaves level below that of the main house. It would be set back a little from the front elevation. It would appear as a subservient feature, and in keeping with the design and scale of the main house. On this basis, it would not appear incongruous and would not conflict with the thrust of Policy EN4 of the CS, with regard to its design within the context of its immediate surroundings, nor with guidance on the design of extensions as set down in the DG.

Amenity issues

12. The boundary between the appeal property and the chapel follows the line of the western side elevation of the chapel and in close proximity to the chapel itself. The eastern side elevation of the house currently slopes slightly away from the chapel from front to back such that it is around 1 metre away from the chapel at the southern end but around 2 metres at the northern end. The proposed extension would have a pitched roof and eaves lower than the current main house. These features would reduce its potential visual impact.
13. The chapel has eight windows in total: 3 large windows in the eastern elevation facing Ingham Road, 2 large windows in the southern elevation, and 3 large windows in the western elevation facing the appeal property. The appeal property currently extends rearwards to a point roughly level with the first window in the western elevation of the chapel. The outlook from this window, therefore, already consists largely of the side elevation of the house, with the single-storey side extension around 2 metres distant and the main side elevation of the house approximately 4 metres distant. The proposal would involve the two-storey side elevation of the house being around 2 metres closer and projecting a little further past the window to the north.
14. The current relationship between the house and the nearest window in the chapel is such that the direct light falling upon the window is largely limited to a short period in the early afternoon, and/or late afternoon in the summer. The main light received by the building is provided by windows in the eastern elevation in the morning, in the southern elevation in the middle part of the day, and in the western elevation later in the day. The two northernmost windows in this western elevation would not be significantly affected by the proposed extensions at the appeal property.
15. In the light of the above, I consider that the proposed extensions would not have any significantly adverse impacts on the light received by the chapel as a whole, nor on the outlook from the one affected window. On this basis, it would not conflict with Policy EN4 of the CS or with general guidance on extensions as laid down in the DG.

Conclusion

16. The proposed extensions would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the area around the junction of Chapel Loke with Ingham Road, and they would not be significantly harmful to the amenities enjoyed by the users of the Lessingham Methodist Church by way of light and outlook. They would not, therefore, conflict with Policy EN4 of the CS or with guidance on extensions as contained in the DG.

Other Matters

17. The Council's decision notice refers to a potential impact of the extensions on privacy at the chapel. Since there would be no windows in the side elevation of the extension, I do not consider that the proposal would have any adverse implications for privacy at the chapel.
18. The chapel stewards have raised a number of issues regarding the proposal. I have some sympathy with the concerns raised, but I note that the comments relate to both the original scheme submitted by the appellants and also to the current situation. The revised scheme, as determined by the Council, would have less impact on the chapel, and the current situation, for example, with regard to boundary fencing, is not a matter for consideration in this case.
19. The appellant has made comments about the degree of usage of the chapel. The degree of usage is not a matter for my consideration, which I have confined to the impact upon the users, however many there may be and however often the chapel is used now or may be used in the future.

Conditions

20. I have attached a condition relating to plans because it is necessary that the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. I have attached a further condition relating to materials in the interests of the visual amenities of the area.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR