



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 7 March 2023

by A Edgington BSc (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 March 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/E2205/W/22/3291774

Crowbridge Cottage, Romden Road, Smarden TN27 8RA

- 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 & Mrs Charlesworth against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01799/AS, dated 8 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is Single Storey Oak Framed Orangery Side Extension.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/E2205/Y/22/3291777

Crowbridge Cottage, Romden Road, Smarden TN27 8RA

- 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 & Mrs Charlesworth against the decision of Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01800/AS, dated 8 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2021.
 - The works proposed are Single Storey Oak Framed Orangery Side Extension.
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed and listed building consent is refused.

Preliminary Matters

3. One of the reasons for refusal for both appeals is that the application drawings are inaccurate. Having compared the existing buildings with the drawings I see no reason to disagree with the Council in this regard. It is readily apparent that the proportions of the roof, and the lean-to on the cottage's southern elevation are not an accurate representation. There are also full height glazed doors to the cottage's south-eastern elevation which have replaced the window shown on the drawings. There is nothing before me to indicate that these doors have listed building consent, and I have not taken these into account. However, although the plans are clearly inaccurate, I have concluded that this would not prejudice my determination of the appeal.
4. To avoid duplication, I have considered the appeals together where appropriate.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposals would preserve the Grade II listed Crowbridge Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest, including setting, (Appeals A and B).

Reasons – Appeals A and B

Heritage assets - significance

6. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that when considering the impact of a proposed development, great weight should be given to an asset's conservation. Paragraph 194 of the Framework states that applicants should describe the significance of heritage assets affected.
7. Crowbridge Cottage is two period buildings, the early 15th century Romden Hall House, which is a two-storey medieval timber framed hall-house, and a relocated 18th century cottage dismantled and moved to accommodate the High Speed Rail Link. The two period buildings are joined by a highly attractive and sympathetically detailed single storey 20th century link, built in a timber framed quasi-manorial style.
8. Romden Hall House is timber framed with rendered infill and a steeply pitched thatched roof, with a jettied tiled roof extension to the rear. The listing states that it is a fine and now rare example of a Wealden hall house, once typical of Kent and East Sussex. It was clearly a house of high status, with sophisticated carpentry. Although re-erected on the site following the 1987 hurricane, Historic England is satisfied that it retains its authenticity and there is nothing before me to indicate otherwise.
9. The cottage was also Grade II listed on its original site at Boys Hall Road, Willesborough. There is limited information in the current listing other than its description as a typical 18th century Kentish cottage with tile hung upper floor, brick stack and a catslide outshut that is little altered externally. Given that it was deemed worthwhile to dismantle and relocate, I conclude that there is considerable significance in its overall form and intact historic fabric.
10. The link has what appears to be a shallow pitched lead roof, timber framing and narrow glazing panels. Its overall subservient scale, articulation and level of detail wholly complements the listed buildings to which it is attached.
11. Although neither listed building is on its original site, and they had no former functional or historic relationship with the other, they are well-spaced by virtue of the single-storey link, and the largely open plot allows appreciation of their form, materials and craftsmanship from all directions.
12. There is a large and imposing aisled timber framed barn situated to the south-west of the cottage which appears to date from the 18th century. This has a distinctive agrarian character arising from weatherboarded walls, tiled roof and large central cart doors beneath a hipped projection. Its ridge line is as tall if not taller than the cottage, it has a larger footprint than the cottage and it is prominent in the southern part of the plot. It is also a dominant visual component to the immediate context of the cottage's southern elevation and partially encloses that space.

13. I conclude that the significance of Crowbridge Cottage arises from the very high aesthetic value of two period buildings, as well as high-quality and intact historic fabric, which evidences the vernacular architecture, materials and craftsmanship associated with specific periods in history and socio-economic status. There is also communal value arising from the former association between Romden Hall House and a prominent local family.
14. Although neither building is in its original setting, and they have contrasting status and building style, the openness of the plot showcases these buildings and enables their appreciation in a wholly rural context which reflects their origins. Each element of Crowbridge Cottage complements and provides a setting for the other, and the immediate agricultural and rural context is reinforced by the presence and proximity of the barn, which the evidence suggests could also be a candidate for listing.

Heritage assets – proposals and effects

15. The orangery would be rectangular with a lantern roof, attached to the cottage's gable end. It would be oak framed, with full-height glazing without glazing bars on two sides, and would have a contemporary streamlined style and formality that would be very much at home in a more suburban setting. The orangery would be incongruous with the underlying rustic architecture and modest fenestration of the host building. The position of the lantern roof would also introduce a feature which would be wholly out of keeping with the context of these fine listed buildings and its symmetry would jar with the slight asymmetry of the existing window immediately above. Although arguments are advanced that the orangery would be proportionate and reasonable in size, these do not address the Council's concerns in relation to its overall design. In any case, as far as I can ascertain the Council has not raised a concern in relation to footprint.
16. The orangery's design would also be out of keeping with the highly rural, and agricultural context of the space in which it would sit, particularly in relation to the extents and rustic texture of the cottage's weatherboarding, hung tiles and random stone facing. This incongruity would be heightened by the presence of the agrarian character of the aisled barn a few metres away. As such, the appreciation of Crowbridge Cottage, including setting, would be diminished, leading to less than less than substantial harm, which is one of the three categories of harm set out in Paragraph 199 of the Framework.
17. Paragraph 202 of the Framework states that where a development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case the benefits would be wholly private.
18. I acknowledge that the heritage statement states that there would be no measurable impact on the heritage status of the host building but as this statement does not address significance at all, this is not convincing evidence.
19. I also appreciate that the current proposals have been reduced in scale from an earlier application, but this does not alter my reasoning.
20. Consequently, the development and works would not preserve the listed buildings or their settings, contrary to Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act 1990. There would also be conflict

with Policy ENV13 of the Local Plan (LP) which is concerned with the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets, and LP Policies SP1, and SP6 which seek to safeguard local distinctiveness, including features of historic interest, and to a lesser extent LP Policy HOU8 which is concerned with ensuring that residential extensions are do not result in harm to the surrounding built form. There would also be conflict with the Ashford Landscape Character Assessment which sets out in its guidance that inappropriate modern building styles should be resisted in the area.

Conclusion – Appeals A and B

21. I conclude that the proposals would be contrary to the Act, the Framework and the local development plan and there are no material considerations of such weight to lead me to conclude otherwise.
22. Appeal A is dismissed.
23. Appeal B is dismissed and listed building consent is refused.

A Edgington

INSPECTOR