



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 4 July 2023

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1760/W/22/3302606

Meadowside, Wiremead Lane, East Cholderton, SP11 8LR

- 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 Matt and Moweena Digweed and Fleming against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03625/FULLN, dated 8 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension to grade II listed dwelling and install replacement front door.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1760/Y/22/3302604

Meadowside, Wiremead Lane, East Cholderton, SP11 8LR

- 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 Matt and Moweena Digweed and Fleming against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03626/LBWN, dated 8 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 14 April 2022.
 - The works proposed are single storey extension linked to grade II listed dwelling and install replacement front door.
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Decision – Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Decision – Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. The appeals relate to the same proposal under different legislation. I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.

Main Issue

4. The main issue for both appeals is the effect upon the significance of the grade II listed building known as Meadowside.

Reasons

5. Section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA) requires the decision maker to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

6. The appeal building is a modest thatched cottage, with a low scale and simple linear form. Its first floor is set up into the thatch, and the low thatched roof dominates the external appearance of the cottage, with its soft and undulating form, and hipped ends. It has a picturesque vernacular quality that is enhanced by its well-tended garden.
7. It is suggested that the west end of the building dates from the 1950s. Whilst there is some dispute in the submissions about this date, it is a modern addition to the existing building that would appear to be of limited significance. Although, owing to its matching design, it does not harm the appearance of the original part of the building. Beyond this, the evidence suggests that the building has much older origins than the late 18th century date suggested in the list description. It has an unusual plan form as a result of the position of its chimney away from the end wall, suggesting it may have started life as a non domestic building. Smoke blackening of the fabric behind the chimney suggests that the building may have been heated by a smoke bay prior to the installation of the current masonry chimney.
8. The building's historic fabric and overall external form are primary contributors to its special interest.
9. In the context of the soft and rather naturalistic appearance of the existing thatched roof, the rigid appearance of the proposed roof would appear out of place. Its impact would be exacerbated by the use of straight gables, alongside the rounded hipped ends of the existing roof. In this respect I find the proposed relationship between the existing west end of the thatched roof and the proposed east facing gable to be problematic.
10. Detaching an extension in this manner is a common way of successfully extending an historic building so that the original form and fabric of the building remains intact, and in this respect, I note the examples referred to by the appellant. However, the main part of the proposed extension would still be very close to the end of the cottage, owing to the wide overhang of the thatch and narrow link. Siting these two different roof forms so close to each other would appear clumsy and would undermine the value of using a link element to provide visual detachment.
11. Furthermore, the drawings suggest that the eaves of the existing thatched roof at the western end would sit on the proposed link roof. This is unlikely to be a workable situation and would be likely to accelerate the decay of the thatch, particularly as the roof does not have a fall.
12. The proposed extension would stand just in front of the existing boundary wall. Although I was unable to verify this on site, it is suggested that the wall is built of cob. It is topped with a small section of thatch. Its omission from the list description does not infer that it is without historic significance. The submitted report¹ does not refer to the wall. From the evidence before me I am unable to come to a view on the historic significance of the wall, however it does at least have some aesthetic value in providing a traditional enclosure to the garden that compliments the materials of the primary building.

¹ Bournemouth Archaeology Meadowside, East Cholderton, Hampshire, Historic Building Assessment Final Report 0075/BH2012.03 September 2012

13. The plans show that the proposed eaves would be very close to the wall's existing thatch top. This would make maintenance of the extension difficult as well as the repair or renewal of the thatched topping to the existing wall.
14. It is suggested that the scale of the extension could be reduced by lessening the roof pitch and dropping the ridge height. This is however not part of the proposal before me and is a matter that I cannot consider further as the appeal process should not be used to progress a scheme.
15. I have found that the proposal would have a significant harmful impact on the picturesque and vernacular appearance of the listed building, which is a primary contributor to its special interest. There would also be some low level harms to the fabric of the building arising from the impacts the proposal would have on future maintenance. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the harm would be less than substantial. Paragraph 202 of the Framework establishes that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
16. The proposal includes the replacement of the existing front door. The current door is an inappropriate fitting for the building and has a harmful impact on its significance. The proposed replacement would improve the appearance of the building and would therefore be a heritage related public benefit. It is however a modest intervention. It is also unrelated to the extension so there can be no guarantee that it would be carried out. These factors lessen the weight I give to this benefit.
17. It is suggested that the proposal would deliver a better living environment for the occupants of the building. The extension would make a very nice addition to the accommodation offer by providing a larger kitchen and better views over the garden from the house. However, for it to be a benefit that could weigh against heritage harm it would need to be a public benefit and not just a private one. The existing Kitchen is small; yet it is well laid out for its size and well related to the living room. There is nothing before me to suggest that its small size negatively affects the long term conservation of the building by, for example, making the building difficult to occupy as a dwelling. I therefore give little weight to this matter.
18. An economic benefit would arise from the construction works, but this would be modest given the small scale of the proposal and is therefore a public benefit that should attract only modest weight.
19. Paragraph 199 of the Framework establishes that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset. Together the public benefits carry limited weight and are not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified.
20. In summary, the proposal would fail to meet the requirements of the LBCA as it would harm the special interest of the listed building. It would be contrary to Policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Local Plan 2011-2029, which seeks to ensure that development proposals make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset.

Other Matters

21. The building is within the East Cholderton Conservation Area (CA). Section 72 of the LBCA requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

The impact of the proposal would be primarily felt from within the curtilage of the building. From the road the extension would not be prominent to view and would be on the other side of the building. It would not lessen the positive contribution that the building makes to the CA, and I can thus be satisfied that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the CA.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons above, both appeals should be dismissed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR