



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 26 June 2023

by Mark Philpott BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 July 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/H0520/Y/22/3309974

1 The Green, Great Staughton, Cambridgeshire PE19 5DG

- 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 Dixon against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00725/LBC, dated 23 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2022.
 - The works proposed are single storey flat roof extension to the rear.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/H0520/W/22/3309975

1 The Green, Great Staughton, Cambridgeshire PE19 5DG

- 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 Dixon against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00730/HHFUL, dated 23 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is single storey flat roof extension to the rear.
-

Decisions

1. Both Appeal A and Appeal B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposed works and development relate to a Grade II listed building named 1 The Green¹. The scheme is the same for both the listed building consent appeal (Appeal A) and the planning appeal (Appeal B), although the legal regimes for each are different. While I have borne in mind my statutory duties in respect of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) as appropriate, to reduce repetition and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals together in this decision letter.
3. The appellants have provided a series of photographs, aerial imagery and map extracts in support of the appeals. The Council and interested parties have had an opportunity to consider this evidence. I have taken the evidence into account as I am satisfied that no prejudice arises in doing so.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposed works and development would preserve the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

¹ List entry number: 1214432

Reasons

5. At the time of listing in 1983, the listed building was identified by the statutory description as being a late 17th century timber framed and plaster rendered cottage, with a steeply pitched pantile roof that was formerly thatch and a later addition to the north-east. It is also described as having a two unit plan, one end stack, and comprising one storey with single storey late 18th and 19th century additions.
6. The aerial imagery provided with the appellants' evidence indicates that in 1964 the building was still single storey with a lower lean-to off one gable end. The two front doors and a window shown to the side of each are indicative of it historically being two dwellings. The imagery also shows the building to be set within the context of a small holding and ancillary agricultural structures, with open fields beyond.
7. There have clearly been some significant alterations to the building since 1964 and its listing, including replacement windows, the insertion of dormers in the roof, a plain tile roof covering, and the blocking up of one of the front doors. A large two storey gabled rear extension was added to the rear during the 1980s, off which is a more recent single storey 'orangery' type kitchen addition featuring a pitched glazed rooflight. Collectively, these additions and alterations have added extensively to the original building's overall footprint and the size of the accommodation it now provides as a single dwelling. In spite of its 20th and 21st century adaptations, the simple rectangular plan and its modest proportions are still discernible. While internally, the exposed traditional timber framing and infill panels are evident throughout the older parts of the listed building, including its lounge.
8. The setting of the original cottage has also changed during the late 20th century, which is now flanked by residential properties. It is also accessed off The Green via a driveway behind high hedging, set behind a single storey garage, and within residential garden enclosed by fencing and vegetation.
9. Based on the information available and my observations on site, and despite the alterations to the building and its surroundings over time, its special interest and significance is primarily derived from its architectural and historic interest as a traditionally constructed vernacular rural cottage. The surviving historic fabric, and legibility of its early modest plan form, speak to the building's authenticity as a pair of modest rural workers' dwellings of considerable age. Its location at the edge of the village of Great Staughton and wider open countryside setting provide a remnant link with its historic rural origins, which also contributes to its special interest and significance.
10. The scheme would entail a single storey side extension to the more recent kitchen extension, matching its depth and eaves height. Its design and material detailing would also be comparable. It is proposed to reuse the existing windows, to replicate the fascia and timber detailing, to insert new doors and sidelights and a flat fixed rooflight.
11. The proposed extension would affect modern fabric and require no physical intervention into the main body of the building. However, it would create a 'u-shaped' footprint and project parallel with the historic rectangular element of the building. The scheme would undermine the legibility of its early modest plan form, particularly looking towards the building from the rear garden.

12. Furthermore, the proposed extension would be positioned directly in front of the lounge doors and thus detract from the traditional form and modest size of the building as perceived from that room. Moreover, the proposed extension together with the existing rear extensions would cumulatively dominate the principal historic structure, undermining the authenticity it derives from its simple rectangular plan and modest proportions. Consequently, the proposed works and development would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the building and conflict with sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act. The building's significance would therefore also be harmed.
13. The appellants have suggested that the proposed works and development would not harm the special interest or significance of the building, partly because the extension would not be visible outside the site. However, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained. Accordingly, this matter does not justify the harm identified.
14. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impacts to the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. In this case, the degree of harm to the listed building as a designated heritage asset would be less than substantial in the terms of the Framework. Paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme including, where appropriate, securing the heritage asset's optimum viable use.
15. It has been put forward that the scheme would be built to the latest insulation standards and thus be energy efficient, which would bring about some limited public benefits. There would also be some small benefits to the economy during construction. It has also been advanced that the proposed works and development would be the best means of creating additional space, satisfy the demands of modern family living, and result in the optimum viable use of the property. However, the building is already in use as a dwelling and thus its optimum viable use has already been secured. Rather, the additional accommodation would realise a larger living space to satisfy the private wants of the appellants, which would not be of public benefit.
16. Overall, the sum of public benefits that weigh in favour of the scheme are very modest and insufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that even less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset carries. Consequently, the proposed works and development conflict with the historic environment protection policies within the Framework. The scheme also conflicts with policies LP2 and LP34 of Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036, which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. Consequently, in respect of Appeal B, the scheme would not accord with the development plan taken as a whole. Material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be reached otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusions

17. For the reasons given above, both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

Mark Philpott

INSPECTOR