



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 27 July 2023

by A Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 September 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1760/W/22/3311470

George Cottage, Village Street, Thruxton, Hampshire SP11 8LZ

- 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 Miss and Miss S & S Chandler & Hayns against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01736/FULLN, dated 4 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 26 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is single storey rear extension and replacement porch.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1760/Y/22/3311471

George Cottage, Village Street, Thruxton, Hampshire SP11 8LZ

- 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 Miss and Miss S & S Chandler & Hayns against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01737/LBWN, dated 4 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 26 August 2022.
 - The works proposed are the single storey rear extension, replacement porch and internal alterations including replacement staircase, ceilings to 1st floor rooms.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. In January 2023, during the determination of the appeal, the Council granted listed building consent (ref: 22/03161/LBWN) for a rear single storey extension, replacement porch and internal alteration. Planning permission (ref: 22/03160/FULLN) was also granted for a single storey rear extension, replacement porch, erection of outbuilding, install window and associated internal alterations at the appeal property.
4. Nonetheless, having regard to my statutory duties under sections 66(1) and 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting and/or listed building consent for any works I, as the decision maker, am required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and can come to my own conclusions in these respects.

5. Consequently, I have determined the appeal scheme on its own planning and conservation merits, while having regard to the permitted scheme and considered the matters of this potential fallback position along with the option of issuing a split decision below.
6. Both Appeals A and B concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. To avoid duplication, I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning.
7. I have used the Council's descriptions of development and works as these more accurately and concisely describe the proposal.
8. As the building's existing extensions are physically attached to the historic core of the building, they, by virtue of section 1(5)(a) of the Act, form part of the listed building. As such, I have considered the proposal to constitute development and works to the listed building, rather than within its setting, and have determined the appeals on this basis.

Main Issue

9. The main issue is whether the proposed development and works would preserve the Grade II listed building, George Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

10. The appeal property is set within a well-landscaped garden plot within the village of Thruxton. It is a Grade II listed building¹ which features a probable 17th century cruck frame, together with 18th century walling and extensions. The building is predominantly finished in brick and flint, with a thatched roof over. A later 20th century extension exists to the rear with modern porch to the front.
11. Despite the extension and alteration of the listed building over time, the front of the building retains a picturesque and pleasing architectural form. Those later additions have not unduly eroded the building's intrinsic heritage merit.
12. Based on the evidence before me, the listed building's special interest and significance is largely derived from its 17th century rural vernacular architecture which has evolved over time, including the building's possible use as an inn, and its visually charming architectural style. Important contributors in these regards, which are pertinent to the appeals, are the use of traditional construction techniques and materials, surviving historic fabric, and the building's general simplicity in form and modest scale. The building also has group value with nearby listed properties.

Appeal proposal and effects

13. The proposal would involve the demolition of the existing 20th century single-storey rear extension and its replacement with a contemporary L-shaped extension, the replacement of the existing front porch, the replacement of the existing staircase, the insertion of a window in the south-west elevation and

¹ List Entry Number: 1093216

the enlargement of the first floor roofspace through the removal of existing ceilings within the rooms marked store and office on the submitted drawings.

14. I note from the evidence before me, and my observations on site, that the established northern additions to the building (the 20th century single-storey extension and the more historic single-storey plus attic extension) have introduced elements to the historic core of the building which project forward of its historic rear elevation. Whilst I accept that these later elements are somewhat at odds with the older core of the property, the predominantly linear evolution of the building, taken as a whole, nonetheless remains intact and a prominent feature.
15. The proposed kitchen extension would compromise this, being of a comparatively large scale relative to the existing extensions and historic core. Although single-storey, its overall projection and arrangement, positioned at a right angle to the main dwelling, would harmfully disrupt the modest scale and simple form of the existing property. This would be the case irrespective of the alleged contemporary and lightweight design approach.
16. I acknowledge the reduced length of the proposed kitchen extension and other amendments made in response to the Council's pre-application advice. I also acknowledge that only a limited amount of historic fabric would be altered in the existing north elevation to accommodate the proposed development and works and that the existing poor extension would be removed. However, for the reasons set out above, I have found the proposal would not preserve the modest scale and simplicity in form which contribute positively to the building's special interest, and those matters carry little weight in favour of the proposed scheme.
17. Turning to the historic fabric of the building, in particular the removal of the ceilings on the first floor, together with the removal of the stud infill partition and the removal and replacement of the modern staircase insertion, I have insufficient information before me to demonstrate the age of those features or to fully understand the effects/extent of any harm as a result of their removal and replacement.
18. That an artex finish exists to the first floor ceiling, with visible signs of deterioration and sagging, does not sufficiently demonstrate that any surviving, historic lath and plaster, that is understood to lie beneath it, needs to be removed. I disagree that a condition would satisfactorily overcome this matter given the uncertainty of any findings. I am of the view that this information would be necessary in advance of a decision being made in order to fully understand the condition of any historic fabric and whether it would be appropriate for it to be removed or repaired. Without clarification, it is not possible to satisfactorily demonstrate that the internal proposals would preserve the special interest of the listed building and not cause harm to its significance.
19. Furthermore, even if the removal of the historic fabric here was found to be acceptable, the increase of the existing ceiling height would compromise the legibility and integrity of the attic space and weaken the traditional hierarchy of spaces within the listed building as a whole.
20. The proposed timber casement window in the south west elevation would sit comfortably with the building's other windows. However, I note inconsistencies

between the elevation drawings and submitted window details. I consider, in this particular case, that a condition in respect of its detailed design would be appropriate and sufficient. A small area of masonry would also be removed in order to insert the window. Relative to the 17th and 18th century core, the historic interest of this fabric is limited due to its mid-20th century age.

21. Similarly, the proposed porch would replace a modern insertion and, subject to the submission of further details by condition, would preserve the special interest of the listed building and not cause harm to its significance. However, the acceptability of these parts of the scheme do not overcome or outweigh the harm identified above.
22. Overall, I conclude that the proposed development and works would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, George Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, contrary to the requirements of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act. The development and works would also conflict with the relevant provisions of Policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (LP, 2016), which in summary seeks to protect heritage assets. Consequently, the proposal would harm the significance of this designated heritage asset.

Public benefits and balance

23. Paragraph 199 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development or works on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
24. With reference to Paragraphs 201 and 202 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent of the development and works relative to the building as a whole, I find the harm to the listed building would be 'less than substantial' in this instance but, nevertheless, of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, Paragraph 202 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.
25. Economic benefits would be brought about through the construction phase and the general investment into the property. However, the scale of those benefits is short-term and very limited by the extent and nature of the proposal. The primary outcomes of the proposed development and works, namely the extension of the building, would be private benefits to the appellant that do not provide clear and convincing justification for allowing the appeal.
26. I note the alleged environmental and flood resilience benefits of the development and works, including the proposed inclusion of insulation in the roof. However, there is no substantive evidence before me that the development and works would genuinely improve thermal efficiency or flood resilience, or that they are inherently reliant on the scheme before me.
27. I note the comments in respect of the first floor ceiling works acting to reveal elements of the building that have long been covered and that this would be a benefit. Whilst this is acknowledged, as set out above, the traditional hierarchy

of spaces within the building would be compromised as a result of this element of the proposed works and historic fabric may be harmed or lost. Therefore, this does not weigh in favour of the appeals. I accept that the removal of the existing poor quality rear extension would sustain and enhance the significance of the listed building. Nevertheless, its replacement with an oversized extension would override any public benefit gained from its removal.

28. Conservation is an active process of managing change to heritage assets in ways that sustain, reveal or reinforce their heritage interests. I note the limited head height within the first floor and the limitations that this brings to its usability. However, I am not persuaded that the scheme before me is fundamentally necessary to secure the optimum viable use of the building, which provides reasonable levels of accommodation across the ground floor. Moreover, no substantive evidence has been put before me which verifies that the property would not be useable or viable as a dwelling now or in the future, or that its conservation as a designated heritage asset would be at risk, if the appeals were to fail and the proposal, as submitted, was not implemented.
29. Overall, the weight that I ascribe to the public benefits that would accrue from the proposal, is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that I attach to the harm I have found. Accordingly, the proposed development and works would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, George Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, contrary to the requirements of section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act, LP Policy E9 and the relevant provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

30. The appeal property is also located within the Thruxton Conservation Area (the CA). In line with section 72(1) of the Act, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
31. Bearing in mind the position, nature and extent of the proposals, I consider that they would have a neutral effect on, and would therefore preserve, the character and appearance of the CA as a whole. As such, the proposal would not harm the significance of this designated heritage asset. I note that the Council had no concerns in these respects either. Nevertheless, the lack of harm in this respect does not weigh for or against the appeal and does not alter my conclusion on the main issue.
32. That no objections to the proposals were received from the Parish Council or local residents does not change my conclusion on the main issue.
33. In coming to my conclusions, I have had regard to the extant scheme. The appellant submits that the differences between the permitted scheme and the appeal scheme before me are minor and undermines the case against the appeal proposal. Additionally, they highlight the option of issuing a split decision.
34. I have been provided with drawings to allow me to understand the difference between the permitted scheme and the appeal scheme. The permitted scheme does include a single storey rear extension, replacement porch, installation of a window and associated internal alterations, which form part of the appeal scheme. However, it does not include the internal alterations including

replacement staircase or ceilings to first floor rooms which are proposed as part of the scheme before me.

35. Given that the permitted scheme would not wholly achieve the desired outcome of the appellant, I cannot be certain that there is any greater than a theoretical possibility that the extant scheme would be implemented. More importantly, having regard to my reasoning above, in omitting the proposed works to the staircase and first floor ceilings, the permitted scheme would be considerably less harmful to the significance of the listed building than the proposal before me, and so does not justify allowing the appeals. In this respect, I attach little weight to the permitted scheme as a fallback position.
36. However, the appellant has highlighted the option of issuing a split decision for aspects of the proposed development and works. In this regard the permitted scheme as a potential fallback position is relevant.
37. I note the similarities and differences of the permitted and proposed schemes in relation to the rear extension and porch. I am also mindful of my conclusion that the replacement porch and the installation of the window would have a neutral effect on the significance of the listed building. When comparing these aspects of the permitted and proposed scheme, I acknowledge that there is a real prospect that the permitted scheme could be implemented. However, I am not persuaded that this is sufficient justification to allow elements of the appeal scheme which would, in totality, cause harm of a similar level to that which has been permitted.
38. Moreover, having regard to the descriptions of the proposed development and works as well as the submitted plans, I am not satisfied that these elements are clearly physically and functionally discrete and/or that they can be easily separated from the proposed scheme in a split decision. Moreover, elements of the proposal, such as the proposed window installation and utility room internal works, are not included within the descriptions of development or works.

Conclusion

39. I have identified that the proposed development and works would be contrary to the requirements of section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act, LP Policy E9 and the relevant provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.
40. I have also had regard to the fallback position and the possibility of issuing a split decision. However, for the reasons given above, these matters have not led me to an alternative conclusion on the main issue.
41. Accordingly, I conclude that Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

A Price

INSPECTOR