



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

Decision by K Savage BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W1525/D/23/3319488

Ewer Farm, Damases Lane, Boreham, Chelmsford, Essex CM3 3AL

- 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 Marriner against the decision of Chelmsford City Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02294/FUL, dated 19 December 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing side and rear extensions. Construction of two storey side extension. Two storey rear extension. Internal alterations.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. In the interest of accuracy, the description of development in the header above is based on the decision notice.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, with particular reference to the building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site lies at the end of a private drive which splinters off from Damases Lane. It is located in a sparsely populated rural area characterised by open agricultural fields and pockets of woodland dotted with detached houses and farm buildings.
 6. The appeal dwelling is a detached two-storey cottage which, according to the Council's officer report, dates from the early 19th Century whilst possibly comprising earlier fabric. The dwelling also features 20th Century additions including a single storey extension to the rear east-facing elevation. The cottage features red brick, black feather-edge timber cladding, distinctive arched gothic-like windows to the front west-facing elevation and southern
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- elevation, as well as three tall chimneys. The boundaries of the site are quite well-screened with mature trees and shrubs.
7. The house has an attractive traditional frontage with its original arched windows and a pitched roofed front timber porch. Notwithstanding the modern additions, the significance of the building is derived from its age and appearance as a simple vernacular cottage and I agree that it should be considered as a non-designated heritage asset.
 8. Whilst the appellant opines that the proposed extension would mimic the scale of the host dwelling, it would appear excessively large given its width, depth and height. The overall bulk and volume of development proposed is significant and would dominate the original cottage. Although the rear two storey extension would respect the existing scale and form of the cottage, the proposed side extension would effectively form an entirely new wing that would fail to appear subservient and would be read as a disproportionate and incongruous addition. The proposed chimney would also be taller than the existing chimneys which would further emphasize the lack of subservience. The proposed link structure, whilst offering a degree of separation between the existing and proposed elements, would not be sufficient to mitigate the imposing scale and form of the proposed extension.
 9. The contemporary appearance and proposed materials, in particular the brown zinc cladding, and extent of glazing to the southern elevation as well as the size of the window within the central link, would jar with the simple and traditional appearance of the cottage. Furthermore, the proposal would create an excessively long frontage which would imbalance the coherent proportions and traditional architectural form of the existing building.
 10. The appellant states that the proposal is in keeping with the surrounding context and highlights the fact that there are a number of large houses with extensions in the area. That may be so, but each case must be considered on its own merits, and the scale and appearance of the extension would fail to harmonise with the modest appearance of the existing cottage. Although I acknowledge that the development would not be visible within the public realm, it would detract from the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. The creation of a more usable family home could be achieved with a more appropriately scaled and designed extension.
 11. Given the above, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area, and would detract from the heritage significance of the non-designated heritage asset. It would therefore conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and Policy DM23 of the Chelmsford Local Plan (2020), which together seek to ensure proposals are well-designed and relate positively to their context. The proposal would also conflict with Policy DM14 of the Chelmsford Local Plan which seeks to ensure proposals do not lead to an unacceptable loss of significance of a non-designated heritage asset.
 12. Paragraph 203 of the Framework states that in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. The evidence before me indicates that the building, though of local significance, does not possess wider importance in heritage terms. I acknowledge that there would be some positive elements of

the scheme where modern features on the existing building would be removed. However, this would be outweighed by the impact of the proposed side extension that would erode the dwelling's historic cottage scale and character, adversely affecting characteristics central to its heritage significance. Overall, therefore, I find that the harm arising should be afforded moderate weight in the planning balance.

Other Matters

13. The Council did not refuse permission in respect of the effect of the proposal on neighbours' living conditions or highway safety. However, an absence of harm in these matters means they are neutral factors weighing neither for nor against the proposal in the planning balance.

Recommendation

14. The proposal would adversely impact the character and appearance of the host dwelling, and its heritage significance as a non-designated heritage asset. Given this, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole. Matters advanced in favour of the proposal, including the creation of a more usable family home, and any economic benefits from construction of the development, would attract only limited cumulative weight. Therefore, there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh the conflict with the development plan.
15. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

K. Savage

INSPECTOR