



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 22 September 2023

by Alison Scott (BA Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 December 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/D3640/W/22/3307457

Grants Cottage, 1 High Street, Chobham, Woking, Surrey GU24 8AD

- 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 Herbert against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/0514/FFU, dated 24 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is timber orangery to rear and replacement porch.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D3640/Y/22/3307461

Grants Cottage, 1 High Street, Chobham, Woking, Surrey GU24 8AD

- 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 and Mrs Herbert against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/0515/LLB, dated 24 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 July 2022.
 - The works proposed are timber orangery to rear and replacement porch.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A and B are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal concerns works and development to Grants Cottage, Number 1 High Street Chobham, a Grade II listed building (List Entry Number: 1294235) listed on 19 July 1984. For the purposes of clarity, whilst it is identified in Historic England's listing identification as Grants Cottage Castle Grove Road, in the interest of consistency and continuity, I shall refer to it as Grants Cottage throughout my decision.
3. In addition, the listed building is situated within Chobham Conservation Area (CA). I am therefore mindful of my statutory duties in respect of 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act (the Act).
4. I note the Council changed the original description of the proposed works and development to '*Construction of a replacement single-storey rear extension, removal of existing flank canopy and construction of porch and widening of opening in the cellar*'. I concur that this more accurately describes the proposal before me.
5. These decisions address both planning and listed building consent appeals for the same site and same scheme. Although the remit of both regimes is

different, in order to reduce repetition and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals together within a single decision.

6. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been updated on 5 September 2023, and after the submission of the appeals. The historic environment policies have remained unchanged within the updated version of the Framework which is a material consideration.
7. With regards to Appeal A, the Council has stated that the proposal would not represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt as it would meet the exception at paragraph 149c) of the Framework. I concur with that position and I have dealt with Appeal A on that basis.

Main Issues

8. The main issues are whether the proposed works and development would preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

9. Grants Cottage is significant for its architectural and historic interest, built in the early 19th Century from local red brick with hipped slate roof over and rendered end stacks under oversailing tops. It is square plan in its layout to the main part of the dwelling and symmetrical to the front elevation with six over six timber sash windows in decorative moulded surrounds to each floor. Whilst the front of the house is more detailed, the rear exhibits a restrained aesthetic. The roof to the rear displays an interesting composition of double hips with a valley junction in-between. A rendered finish single storey return extends across part of the rear elevation and contrasts with the red brick of the main house and has a subservience to it due to its scale and massing, with a uniform slate pitched roof above. By itself, it is of aesthetic value but forms part of the overall value of the listed building. A timber framed glazed conservatory extension built around 1997 sits adjacent. All things considered, despite non-original additions and changes that have occurred to the listed building, it represents the characteristics of an elegant Georgian dwelling with an imposing character that is typical of its time.
10. To the rear of the dwelling is a single storey rendered extension with a modern timber and glazed conservatory to one side. Based on the evidence before me, and my observations I consider that the significance and special interest of Grants Cottage mainly derives from its historic fabric, the quality of its architectural detailing and its plan form. In my experience, the reference to group value within a list entry relates to the extent to which the exterior of the building contributes to the architectural or historic interest of any group of buildings of which it forms part. Nonetheless, to be included on the statutory list the building would also have special architectural and historic interest that forms its significance.
11. The Council has not objected to the proposed porch and orangery, the replacement window to the rear of the rendered extension and the loss of modern kitchen lobby walls and the existing conservatory. From my assessment of the proposed works and development, I consider I have no reason to contradict these particular findings. This is because the overall size, location and design of the orangery would be similar to that of the existing

conservatory. The porch would be limited in size and its design and materials would be sympathetic to the significance/special interest of the listed building. Consequently, I will therefore concentrate on the areas in contention between the parties. These relate to the removal of the modern conservatory in order to erect a new orangery style extension with lantern roof on the same footprint. The majority of the north facing wall of the existing kitchen within the return would be removed to create one single room combined with the new extension as an open plan kitchen/diner. The internal lobby walls would also be removed in the kitchen area. A set of French doors are proposed to be inserted into the external kitchen wall along the south facing side replacing an existing six over six timber sliding sash window above the sink as well as replacing a window to the rear of the rendered extension. An external porch to the side entrance of the rendered extension would also be created. In addition, below the internal stairs within the cellar space, an opening within a dividing wall would be widened.

12. With regard to the rendered extension, the appellant considers that the Ordnance Survey Maps (OS) dated 1873 and 1881 indicate that the rendered extension does not form part of the original building. However, there is an outbuilding shown on those editions of the OS that appears to be in a similar location to part of the rendered extension. As the external walls of the extension are rendered and plastered, any evidence in relation to alterations and the age of the brickwork was not visible at the time of my site visit. In any case, it appears that the extension is shown on the 1916 edition of the OS. Therefore it is more likely than not that it was constructed prior to that date.
13. The external walls of the return remain solid save for original fenestration openings and a modern and single internal door leading from the kitchen into the conservatory provides access into this space. Despite the position of the conservatory, the structural wall on the north side can be visibly identified as the external wall of the return of the listed building. From the outside, the glazing of this conservatory allows the wall to be clearly understood as the original structural wall. It is an integral component of the listed building and contributes to the special interest of the heritage asset as a whole.
14. The historic fabric of a listed building will always be an important part of the asset's significance and the retention of as much historic fabric as possible is in the interest of conserving the heritage asset. By removing the structural wall to allow an open-plan kitchen layout would result in the complete loss of the full length of this external wall, and consequentially a substantial part of the original fabric of this listed building would be irretrievably lost. Furthermore, additional historic fabric would be removed through the widening of the opening in the cellar dividing wall. I acknowledge that at low level the wall contains modern elements but the majority appears to consist of historic brickwork. Whilst this on its own would involve a small amount of historic fabric, it would have a slight adverse impact on the special interest/significance of the listed building.
15. Windows are often among the most prominent features and an integral part of the design of a listed building. The design, materials, details of construction and function of historic windows are all important to the architectural and historic interest of an individual building and this contributes to the significance of a heritage assets and its special interest. The kitchen window on the southern side of the rendered extension is a six over six sash window. There is

little evidence before me to indicate that this is not original to this part of the listed building. The loss of this window and aperture by widening it to create French doors would involve the loss of historic fabric that would adversely impact the special interest/significance of the listed building.

16. Overall, losing this amount of historic building fabric in perpetuity would weaken the historical composition of the listed building. In combination with the changes to its plan form and insertion of new doors would not preserve the special interest of the listed building.
17. The proposed porch and orangery, the replacement window and the loss of modern kitchen lobby walls and the conservatory would have a neutral impact on the special interest/significance of the listed building and some aspects of the proposal would individually constitute slight adverse harm. Nonetheless, overall, its impact would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building, contrary to the expectations of the Act in this respect.
18. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification. Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset, Paragraph 202 of the Framework requires the less than substantial harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing the optimum viable use.
19. Bearing in mind the scale and nature of the proposals, I judge that the degree of the harm to the significance of the listed building be less than substantial.
20. Considering all of the above, I conclude that the harm caused to the significance of the listed building would be, bearing in mind the scale and nature of the proposals, less than substantial. The additional internal space, the layout and the usability all year round that would be provided by the proposals would clearly be beneficial to the appellants. However, I regard these as private rather than public benefits. Moreover, this scheme and the alterations proposed are not the only way to deliver those benefits. The property is currently occupied for residential purposes and in sound overall condition from my observations. There is no reason to conclude that its continued occupation and optimum viable use are dependent on the proposals before me.
21. Even though I have found that the harm to the heritage asset is less than substantial it is not to be treated as a less than substantial objection to the proposal. There are no public benefits to outweigh the great weight to be given to the harm to the heritage asset. As such, the proposal would not comply with paragraph 202 of the Framework. In addition, there is no clear and convincing justification for the harm to the significance of the heritage asset. The proposal would therefore not comply with Section 16 of the Framework and it would not meet the historic environment safeguarding objectives of the Surrey Heath Borough Council Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Local Plan, Policies CP2 and DM17.

22. As I have concluded, by virtue of the proposed development and works to the listed building, it would not preserve it. Therefore, when considering the merits of the benefit of additional internal space it would bring, and the modern layout the appellant's are seeking, this is largely a private benefit for the appellant's. They state that the proposed extension would provide usable space all year round. However, that is not to say that this scheme is the least most harmful method to extend the listed building. The property is currently occupied for residential purposes and in sound overall condition. There is no reason to conclude that its continued occupation and optimum viable use are dependent upon the proposals before me.

Other Matters

23. Whilst the Council make no reference in their reason for refusal to the effect of the development and works on the character and appearance of the Chobham CA, as a statutory consideration, I am required to have regard to this when determining the appeals. From my observations at the site visit and the details available to me, including the Chobham Conservation Area Character Appraisal 2001, I consider that the significance of the CA is mainly derived from the predominant rural character and range of traditional buildings that it contains, together with its use of materials, pattern of development and the relationship of the buildings to the spaces around them.
24. The Council's Report states that the proposals would not harm the CA. Given my findings above with regard to the proposed orangery and porch, I consider those elements would have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the CA. Moreover, the remaining parts of the proposals would have minimal impact on the wider area and/or the street scene of the High Street. As such, I have no reason to disagree with the Council that the proposal would have a neutral impact on the character and appearance of the CA and the expectations of the Act would be met in this regard.

Balance and Conclusion

25. Irrespective of my findings relating to its effect upon the CA, the works and development would fail to preserve the listed building. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Alison Scott (BA Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

INSPECTOR

