



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2024

by R J Redford MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/Y/24/3337312

Yeo Cottage, 6 Giggs Hill Rd, Thames Ditton, Surrey KT7 0BT

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Mashood Ashraf against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 2023/1949.
 - The works proposed is a single-storey side extension to an existing two storey house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building known as "St Leonards Cottages" (Ref: 1189130) (the LB) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Giggs Hill Green Conservation Area (the CA).

Reasons

3. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
4. The CA covers the area surrounding a large, broadly triangular open space which resembles a traditional village green. Formerly it would have been towards the edge of Thames Ditton but over time the intensity of development spreading out from the Thames has subsumed the more rural setting of the green. The properties along the northern edge of the green and towards the east represent the transitional period of development when Thames Ditton started to expand from the 18th century onwards.
5. The significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to this appeal, is primarily associated with how the properties along the northern boundary of the green inform the context and frame the open space with regards its historic edge of settlement location. This is in accordance with the information within the CA's Statement of Designation (SD) along with the Thames Ditton and Giggs Hill Green Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Proposals and my observations on site.
6. The LB dates to the late 18th century and the list description moots it to be a former stable block. However, the SD clearly identifies it as alms houses. In

either case these uses would not have been unexpected in such an edge of settlement location. The LB's symmetrical and historically rectilinear form, with a regular cadence of bays, would be characteristic of such necessarily functional buildings. Therefore, in relation to this appeal, I find the special interest of the LB to be primarily associated with its physical form and its relationship with the CA, specifically the green.

7. The LB has been converted into 6 separate dwellings with the appeal property constituting the final bay on the right, when viewed from the front. The appeal property has been extended to the rear by an irregular two-storey addition which extends beyond the LB's side elevation. From the information before me it would appear this extension was built in the 1950s and is a similar or earlier age to the series of flat roofed extensions which have been erected along the length of the rear of the LB.
8. The proposal would seek to further extend the existing rear addition with a modern, single storey extension. It would wrap the rear of the existing rear addition and extend out to the side. The front elevation would be largely glazed, and it would have a flat sedum roof.
9. The proposed side location would further extend the appeal property beyond the original side elevation of the LB and create a pronounced L-shaped footprint. This would further dilute the legibility of the LB's rectilinear form, and the former rear and side elevations of the building. The extent the proposal would protrude to one side would not respect the regular cadence of the bays or the symmetry of the LB's frontage. The proposal would therefore harm the physical architectural form of the LB and thereby fail to preserve its significance.
10. That the proposal is smaller than the previously refused scheme, would not physically alter the formal façade of the LB and the appellant considers it not to be overly visible from the wider area is noted. However listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest as a whole, irrespective of whether a proposal may be less impacting than a previous iteration or whether public views of the building can be gained.
11. The LB as a dominant feature of the green helps to define its limits and inform the significance of the CA's designation. The visual connectivity with the LB and the edge of the green is therefore important.
12. However, the proposal would unbalance the symmetry of the LB and the regularity of the building's frontage. The proposal's modern form would draw attention within an otherwise traditional street scene which would be further exacerbated by the proposed glazed front elevation. This would be south facing so would at times be highly reflective and visible from the green. In cumulation these factors would highlight the proposal rather than create a subservient relationship with the LB and so would harm the visual character of the northern boundary of the green. Therefore, the proposal would fail to preserve the relationship between the LB and green which is characteristic of this part of the CA.
13. It is acknowledged that there is mature planting including trees to the front of the appeal site. However, these are to one side of the location of the proposed extension. Between the proposed extension and the green is the driveway

which will be retained, and by its very nature would need to be kept open thus providing clear views of the front of the proposal from the green.

14. Accordingly, for the reasons given above the proposal would not preserve the special interest of the LB or the significance of the CA so, in this case, would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets of a moderate order. In accordance with paragraph 208 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) this level of harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use.
15. The appellant opines that the proposal would alter the appeal property from a small 2 bedroomed house, with convoluted layout, to a 4 bedroomed house which would comply with the national space standards. They consider this would be better suited to the size of the appeal site and improve the layout in terms of fire safety.
16. Although there is potential a change in house size may be beneficial to the local housing stock, whether such a need exists or that there is a surplus of smaller homes, which are also an important part of the overall housing mix, has not been evidenced. It is also noted that the appeal property has been successfully used as a dwelling for a considerable time in its current form and there is nothing to substantiate that occupiers are at risk on account of fire safety. Conclusions similarly drawn by the Inspector in the previous appeals¹.
17. Consequently, I find the proposed public benefits would not outweigh the less than substantial harm identified. It would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the Framework and would conflict with policy DM12 of the Development Management Plan which, amongst other things, seeks to protect, conserve, and enhance the borough's historic environment.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/K3605/W/21/3289317 and APP/K3605/Y/21/3289418