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## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 8 July 2024

**by L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 19<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

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### **Appeal A Ref: APP/K0425/W/23/3334955**

#### **The Old Weir House St. Peter Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 1NQ**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Ms Maxine MacPherson against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
- The application Ref is 23/05469/FUL.
- The development proposed is householder application for removal of existing ground floor extension and construction of replacement larger rear extension across the rear elevation.

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### **Appeal B Ref: APP/K0425/Y/23/3334957**

#### **The Old Weir House St. Peter Street, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 1NQ**

- 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 Ms Maxine MacPherson against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - West Area (Wycombe).
  - The application Ref is 23/05470/LBC.
  - The works proposed are listed building application for removal of existing ground floor extension and construction of replacement larger rear extension across the rear elevation.
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## **Decisions**

### *Appeal A*

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### *Appeal B*

2. The appeal is dismissed.

## **Preliminary Matters**

3. Both appeals relate to the same scheme under different but complimentary legislation, I have therefore dealt with them together in my reasoning except where indicated otherwise.
4. I have noted the amended plans submitted with the appeal. However, the Council made its decision on the original plans submitted with both applications. For the avoidance of any doubt, I confirm I have determined the appeal on the basis of the same plans as those determined by the Council as indicated in the Council's decision notices.

## **Main Issue**

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed The Old Weir House and the character

and appearance of the area bearing in mind it would be within the Marlow Conservation Area.

## **Reasons**

6. The appeal property is a dwelling known as the grade II listed The Old Weir House (The Old Weir House). It sits in the middle of and shares group value with a row of properties (Marlow Ferry, the Two Brewers and the Minnows) on St Peter Street and is also within the Marlow Conservation Area (CA).

### *Significance*

7. The Old Weir House is a C17 / C18 two storey dwelling with attic. It was originally timber framed but has been built up and altered overtime. It is finished in vitreous red brick with dressings and has a plain clay tiled roof. It has a variety of high quality architectural features such as a two storey angular bay window, dormer windows, sash windows and an arched recessed front door. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal, the significance of The Old Weir House, is founded on its age, traditional architectural detailing and group value as part of a row traditional properties which extend along the St Peter Street road frontage close to The River Thames.
8. The CA covers the main historic core of the town which comprises mainly dwellings and commercial properties orientated around a town centre and The River Thames. The CA has many high quality traditional buildings. Development is generally arranged following a grid layout informed by a medieval street pattern and influenced by The River Thames. Insofar as is relevant to this case, in my view the significance of the CA is founded on the variety and quality of the traditional architecture within it.

### *Effect on significance*

9. It is proposed to replace an existing single storey rear extension with a much larger sedum covered flat roofed single storey rear extension. A first floor window would also be replaced with a deeper timber casement window which would also facilitate the removal of existing plastic piping attached to the rear elevation. To create the opening to access the proposed extension and create an extended kitchen and dining area, a modern window and a section of masonry would be removed at ground floor level and a steel supporting beam installed.
10. I note the rear of the appeal property has not been specifically identified by the Council as part of their assessment of significance and the listing description does not mention the plan form of the appeal property. I also note the proposal would not be visible from St Peter Street, or significantly from anywhere other than the rear garden of The Old Weir House. I accept the Council's Conservation Area Appraisal does not mention the area to the rear of the appeal property and I have also considered the extension to the rear of the Minnows noting the artificial turf, balustrading and large raised rooflight. I also accept there would be no cumulative effect associated with the development / works approved under an earlier scheme<sup>1</sup> as they would be replaced by the appeal scheme.

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<sup>1</sup> Council reference 20/06866/FUL

11. However, the proposed extension, with its roof lights, large door and contemporary finish and form would have a highly modern appearance which would conflict with the traditional architectural features of the listed building. Projecting into the rear yard leaving little outside space at ground floor level and spanning the majority of the width of the listed building the proposed extension would be a large and dominant feature of the rear elevation at ground floor level. Furthermore, the proposed first floor window, much larger than other existing windows, would appear noticeably different in scale to the traditional windows of the appeal building exacerbating the conflict between the traditional features of the existing property and the proposals.
12. I accept the masonry which would need to be removed clearly has sections which have been rebuilt using both brick and flint and does not have the same age or quality of finish as the masonry on the upper floors of the building or its front elevation. However, a relatively large area of masonry would be removed which clearly has sections which are of some age, including some red brick. In my view, even if not original, it depicts the historical maintenance and alteration of the building over its lifetime and its removal, to the extent proposed, would clearly result in the loss of and damage to the listed building's historic fabric.
13. However, the proposals would extend the existing kitchen and dining area, effectively enlarging these rooms. The existing ground floor layout would not therefore be significantly altered. A dropped soffit bulkhead would be incorporated denoting the line of the existing rear wall. Thus, in my view, there would be no harm to the significance of the listed building associated with its plan form.
14. Nevertheless, overall, the proposals would have a highly conflicting modern appearance, which would detract from the traditional architectural features of the listed building and would result in the loss of and damage to historic fabric. The proposals would therefore fail to preserve and harm the significance of the designated heritage asset. Consequently, it follows that this conflict and harm to the significance of The Old Weir House, a traditional building within the CA, would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA harming its significance as a whole.
15. The harm to the listed building and the CA combined would be less than substantial and towards the lower end of any range. However, it is still of considerable importance and weight. In these circumstances, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.

### *Planning and Heritage Balance*

16. The proposals would improve the living conditions for the occupiers in terms of additional internal and improved living space. However, with the absence of detailed evidence to the contrary, these are personal benefits and not public. I acknowledge the economic benefits of construction. I also note the water retention, frost and drought tolerance, ecological, insulating and carbon reduction qualities of the proposed sedum roof. However, overall, any public benefits there may be, are clearly modest and would be insufficient to outweigh the great weight I must attach to the harm I have identified to the designated heritage assets.

17. For these reasons the scheme would harm the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed The Old Weir House and the character and appearance of the CA. Thus, the scheme conflicts with paragraphs 205 and 208 of the Framework. It also fails to accord with Policies CP9, CP11, DM20, DM31, DM35 and DM36 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019), which taken together seek to safeguard the character and appearance of an area and heritage assets.

### **Other Matters**

18. In reaching these conclusions I have noted the comments with regard to the Council's handling of the proposals. I also note that the appeal property is in good order which in part is due to it being carefully maintained. However, I have had regard only to the planning and heritage merits of the case, and none of these other matters are sufficient to outweigh my earlier findings.

### **Conclusion**

19. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

*L Fleming*

INSPECTOR