



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 2 July 2024

by J J Evans BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st August 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/R3650/W/23/3324806

Old Barn Cottage, Church Lane, Witley, Godalming, Surrey GU8 5PW

- 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 & Mrs M & A Powner against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application reference is WA/2022/02781.
 - The development proposed is - Erection of a first floor rear bedroom extension with associated loggia including potential knock down and rebuilding of existing ground floor kitchen. – Erection of a single storey linking extension between the cottage and existing barns. – Formation of a master ensuite bathroom in attic space above existing study including insertion of roof lights. – Retention of existing secondary glazing to some windows in the existing house (if consent required). – Full conversion of existing barn and barn wing into habitable accommodation including insertion of mezzanine floors and alterations to fenestration. – Formation of sunken terrace / garden and new pedestrian access to highway. – Repairs and restoration to 2 no fireplaces. Reinstatement of 1 no Inglenook fireplace following removal of C20th fire surround with repair works to all flues / chimneys as necessary. – General external and internal associated alterations / works / repairs to existing listed and curtilage listed buildings.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/R3650/Y/23/3324808

Old Barn Cottage, Church Lane, Witley, Godalming, Surrey GU8 5PW

- 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 & Mrs M & A Powner against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application reference is WA/2022/02780.
 - The works proposed are - Erection of a first floor rear bedroom extension with associated loggia including potential knock down and rebuilding of existing ground floor kitchen. – Erection of a single storey linking extension between the cottage and existing barns. – Formation of a master ensuite bathroom in attic space above existing study including insertion of roof lights. – Retention of existing secondary glazing to some windows in the existing house (if consent required). – Full conversion of existing barn and barn wing into habitable accommodation including insertion of mezzanine floors and alterations to fenestration. – Formation of sunken terrace / garden and new pedestrian access to highway. – Repairs and restoration to 2 no fireplaces. Reinstatement of 1 no Inglenook fireplace following removal of C20th fire surround with repair works to all flues / chimneys as necessary. – General external and internal associated alterations / works / repairs to existing listed and curtilage listed buildings.
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Decision

1. Appeal A: the appeal is dismissed.
2. Appeal B: the appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

3. Old Barn Cottage is a grade II listed building, within the Witley Conservation Area. In addition to the cottage there are two associated outbuildings, one described as a former threshing barn, attached to which is a former stable, now known as the barn wing. The main parties have regarded the barn and barn wing as curtilage listed buildings, and given their age and visual and historic functional linkage with the cottage I have no reason to disagree. Consequently, as required by Sections 16, 66, and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) I have paid special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
4. As set out above, there are two appeals on the same site, one for planning permission and the other for listed building consent. They seek extensions and alterations to the cottage, the barn and the barn wing. I have considered each proposal on its individual merits, although to avoid duplication I have dealt with the two schemes together, except where otherwise indicated.
5. The description of works in the headings above comes from the original application form. In part E of the appeal forms it is stated that the description of works has changed, and an email from the Council has been provided with their suggested description changes. However, within the grounds of appeal the appellants state that the original description is full and precise and better describes the various elements of the works. As neither of the main parties have provided written confirmation that revised description of works have been agreed, accordingly I have used those given within the original applications.

Main Issue

6. The main issue for both appeals is whether the works would preserve a listed building and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and linked to that whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Reasons

7. Old Barn Cottage and its associated outbuildings are positioned within a central position within the village, near to the church, village school and Jubilee Hall, with other residential properties bordering the gardens. The land slopes gently up towards the west, and the cottage is set back from Church Lane in an elevated position, with one wall of the former threshing barn aligned parallel to the public highway. Attached to the barn and forming a single storey wing is the former stables building, with the buildings together having an L-shaped plan form.
8. The cottage is a late sixteenth century detached two storey house with an attic floor. The house comprises three similarly sized bays, and these bays and the historic extension to the southern elevation are timber framed with brick and

stone fill under a tiled roof. In addition to the late seventeenth century extension, there are other twentieth century single storey extensions. Despite these the cottage has a modest, vernacular appearance that derives not only from its size, but also from its essentially rectangular plan form and from the use of materials that reflect those commonly found in the local area. There are cat-slide tiled roofs over some of the extensions, and these give a distinctive, vernacular appearance to the cottage, and this and the use of red plain tiles, the form of the roofs, along with the presence of various stacks one of which is particularly large, are all part of the special interest of this listed building as well as being representative of traditional local styles. In addition to the locally distinctive red tiles, the presence of timber framing and hanging tiles reflects the historic vernacular of this rural domestic building, as well as its development over time. These features, along with the great age of the cottage and its proximity to the church are all part of the significance of this listed building.

9. Close to the house is the barn and its attached wing. These buildings have a legible subservience of function and appearance to the cottage, due to their agricultural forms and their positioning lower down the hillside. The buildings show evidence of extensive repairs and modifications, as both have been re-roofed, have concrete floors, and modern double glazed rooflights and windows. Recent repairs to the timber frame are evident within the barn, and modern timber boarding is present upon both gable ends. Notwithstanding this, both buildings retain historic fabric, particularly the timber framing and parts of the timber roof structure, and the barn not only has a functional relationship with the cottage, but also has a former opening onto Church Lane. The age of these buildings remains evident, as does their legible functional relationship to the cottage and to the lane. This, along with their former agricultural forms and roles, their partial enclosure of a yard, along with their vernacular appearance, including the presence of historic traditional materials, is all part of the significance of these listed curtilage buildings. They also make an important contribution to the setting of the house, particularly as they reflect the former historic role of the cottage as a farmstead.
10. The historic core of the village has an essentially linear layout due to the focus of settlement along Petworth Road, which is a busy main route linking nearby towns. By contrast, Church Lane has a tranquil, enclosed nature deriving in part from the narrowness of the highway but also because of the presence of tall hedges and walls that define and enclose the public realm. The church dominates the area, and this social and physical dominance along with the presence of the nearby village school and hall, gives a distinct community focus to the lane, and one which is enhanced by the presence of numerous high quality historic houses near the church, one of which is the appeals property. The cottage and its barns make a positive contribution to the conservation area, as they reflect the development of the village over time and are part of its attractive high-quality historic character and appearance. The significance of the conservation area also includes the repeated presence of local vernacular styles and materials, such as timber framing, the abundant use of red coloured tiles and bricks, including for hanging tiles, and tall, dominant chimneys.
11. The existing single storey modern extensions to the cottage have a legible subservience of size and form to the host building, but the proposed rear extension would appear as a large, discordant addition. Although the extension would be above the existing kitchen, the presence of the loggia and the

addition of a first floor would erode the essentially rectangular historic form of the cottage. The extension would appear as a large perpendicular wing which would be at harmful odds with the simple, linear form of the existing building. Hanging tiles would harmonise with those already present on the building, but this in itself would serve to exaggerate the height of the extension. Even with the presence of a lower ridge and a hip, the extension would have a tall and bulky appearance, that would detract from the vernacular simplicity of the cottage.

12. The use of matching plain tiles and bonnet hips would provide some degree of harmony with the cottage, and the catslide roof would reference that of the historic extension. However, the uninterrupted impact of the sweeping roofscape would be disrupted by the provision of the dormer. The proposed roof would comprise a variety of elements that when taken together would have a complexity of form that would be at harmful odds with the simplicity of the existing roofs. Moreover, the loggia would exaggerate the size of the wing, and although the roof slope would be similar to that on the historic extension, the combination of the depth and breadth of the extension would result in an overly bulky addition to the building with a complex roofscape that would be to the detriment of the simplicity of its host and its significance.
13. The position of the extension to the rear of the house along with the slope of the land and the presence of tall hedgerows bounding the property would provide limited views of the extension. Nevertheless, it would be visible above the hedgerow, and if the proposed pedestrian gate was installed there would be clear views of it. Rather than appear as a subservient addition to the cottage, the size and bulk of the extension would be unacceptably dominant, and landscaping cannot be relied upon to screen development for its lifetime. Although the extension would unacceptably harm the cottage's special interest, the use of materials to harmonise with the host and the variety of forms and extensions that exists amongst nearby historic buildings would result in the works having a neutral impact upon the conservation area.
14. As regards the barns, these buildings are clearly visible from the public realm, and the long flank wall forms a focal point in the lane that can be seen when approaching from the church. These historic buildings show evidence of numerous twentieth century alterations, and in addition to the works referred to above, a mezzanine floor has been installed to allow the use as a residential annexe. Despite these changes, the buildings have retained their functional, agricultural appearance, along with their legible subservience to the cottage. Not only do these buildings have significance in their own right, but they form an important part of the setting of the cottage, including providing clear evidence of it being a rural farmstead.
15. The timber cladding of the barn would substantially alter its appearance. The timber frame and the panelling would be hidden from view, and the attractive visual focal point the barn makes within the street scene would be lost as the uniformity of the building would have a recessive appearance within the conservation area, rather than one that draws the eye. The contribution the barn makes to the vernacular character and appearance of the conservation area would be eroded. In addition, the harmonious visual cohesion that exists due to the presence of the timber framing upon the buildings would also be lost.

16. Whilst noting the historic use of timber boarding for the barn, taken as a whole the works would result in a building with a legible residential appearance, not just because of the uniformity of the boarding, but also from the presence of high-level gable windows, French doors, large, glazed panels, and a tall stove pipe. The essentially agricultural appearance of the building would be diminished, and it would be replaced with one that was overtly residential, harmfully detracting from the primacy of the cottage. Not only would the functional agricultural form of the barn be eroded, but so would the legible ancillary contribution it makes to the setting of the cottage.
17. Clearly the barn and barn wing have been altered and adapted over time. There is evidence of the historic timber boarding having been pegged onto the timber frame, and the removal of the mostly modern materials infill panels would improve the loading on the timber frame and allow the historic timber work to be repaired. This would be a benefit of the scheme, as would lowering the ground levels away from the walls of the barns. However, landscaping and engineering works could occur irrespective of the conversion, as could repairs to the timber frame, and particularly so as it was evident that recent repairs have already occurred.
18. There are other properties within the village that have timber boarded buildings including at Witley Manor, Bank Cottage and Lashams, and the use of timber boarding is a vernacular material that is evident within the village. However, of the comparisons within the conservation area, these buildings have an obvious functional, mostly agricultural / outbuilding appearance, unlike the domestic appearance that would result from the appeals schemes. Step Cottage has partial timbering, whilst Jubilee Hall is constructed of interlocking weatherboard that has a clean, mechanically uniform appearance. The garage and store permitted at Church Lane House (application reference WA/2019/0267) has a modest size and ancillary appearance. Given these differences, these comparisons do not form a binding precedent for approving the appeals scheme.
19. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that works to listed buildings should enhance or better reveal their significance, and that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. This is irrespective of whether any harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Given my findings, the extension and the works to the barns would harm the special interest of these listed buildings and also harm the setting of the cottage. In addition, the works to the barns would harm the conservation area. The harms would be less than substantial as the works would affect only part of the buildings, the setting, and the conservation area, although these harms would be of considerable importance and weight.
20. Under such circumstances, the Framework advises that where development would lead to less than substantial harm that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The extension to the cottage would provide additional living accommodation and update it to a modern standard. A comprehensive programme of maintenance and repairs would be undertaken, and the removal of modern alterations would also take place. As regards the works to the barn, public benefits would arise following a programme of repairs.

21. Such public benefits would be significant, but as they could be undertaken irrespective of the works this tempers the weight that can be attributed to them. Furthermore, the provision of additional living accommodation would be personal rather than public benefits. On balance, the public benefits would not outweigh the significant harms to the heritage assets, and the continued viable use of the property is not dependent on the works as the buildings have ongoing residential uses.
22. For these reasons the works would fail to preserve the special interest of these listed buildings, nor preserve the setting of the cottage, and the works to the barn would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. This would conflict with requirements of the Act, and as the harms would not be outweighed by public benefits, this would be contrary to objectives of the Framework. Nor would the scheme accord with the requirements of Policy HA1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan: Strategic Policies and Sites (2018), and Policies DM20 and DM21 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2023). These policies seek amongst other things, the conservation or enhancement of heritage assets, that development preserves or enhances listed buildings and their settings and any special architectural or historic interest they possess, and that which preserves or enhances conservation areas, thereby reflecting objectives of the Framework.

Other Matters

23. In addition to the works considered above, a variety of others have been proposed. Listed building consent is required for all internal and external works that have the potential to affect the special architectural or historic interest of a listed building. Given the age and form of the buildings, many of the works proposed would impact upon their special interest, including those that would be considered to be reversible. Having regard to the nature and the totality of the works, and this would include works to historic fabric and the impact of engineering works within the garden, the reliance upon conditions for detail would not provide the level of certainty that is required to consent works. However, as I am dismissing the appeals for other reasons, I have not pursued these matters with the parties.

Conclusion

24. For these reasons, the works would fail to preserve the special interest of these listed buildings, nor preserve the setting of the cottage, and the works to the barn would also fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area. The public benefits that arise would not outweigh these significant harms, and the works would thereby fail to accord with objectives of the Act, the Framework and the requirements of the above referenced development plan policies. Thus, for the reasons given above, and having considered all other matters raised, the appeals are dismissed.

J J Evans

INSPECTOR