

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 13 August 2024

by David Cliff BA Hons MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 September 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1570/W/24/3342829

Barcroft, Carmen Street, Great Chesterford CB10 1NR

- 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 Mr & Mrs Chater against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application reference is UTT/24/0010/HHF.
The development proposed is described in the application form as 'two storey rear extension and conversion of outbuilding to form residential accommodation as set out in approved application reference: UTT/0748/10/REN & UTT/0749/10/LB'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1570/Y/24/3342823

Barcroft, Carmen Street, Great Chesterford CB10 1NR

- 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 & Mrs Chater against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application reference is UTT/24/0011/LB.
 - The works proposed are described in the application form as two storey rear extension and conversion of outbuilding to form residential accommodation as set out in approved application reference: UTT/0748/10/REN & UTT/0749/10/LB'.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As the proposals relate to a listed building and are located in a conservation area, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 ('the Act').
4. Planning permission and listed building consent has previously been granted and subsequently renewed (latterly in 2010) for a two-storey rear extension and conversion of outbuildings to residential accommodation. These approvals have expired and are no longer extant.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are (i) whether the proposals would preserve a Grade II listed building described in the official list entry as 'House immediately northwest of Wearn's Folly' (Ref: 1112287) and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses and (ii) whether the proposals would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Chesterford Conservation Area ('the Conservation Area').

Reasons

6. The appeal property is a 19th century two-storey timber framed dwellinghouse with slate roof. The building incorporates a central brick chimney stack indicating an historic two-up, two-down room layout with back-to-back hearths, serving two dwellings into the early 20th century. Recent alterations include replacement and altered rear windows and rough cast cement rendering to the exterior walls. The building retains historic fenestration to the street elevation, other than the removal of a front door. The historic mapping from 1903 shows a detached single storey outbuilding which is longer than the outbuilding as existing on site today.
7. Taking account of the above, I find that special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to these appeals, to be primarily associated with the architectural and historic interest of a 19th century village centre residential building, including the evidence of traditional materials and construction techniques. The detached outbuilding, despite its alterations, also contributes to its special interest as evidence of the ancillary domestic functions accommodated outside of the main building.
8. The Conservation Area includes the historic core of the village. The settlement has historically been at a strategic location at the entrance to the Fens on the ancient trade routes to the Wash. In the 17th century, the village became an important stopping point enroute to the Newmarket races. Further development in the village was boosted by the development of the Newmarket Branch Line in the mid-19th century. The village centre, including Carmen Street and its listed buildings, includes a rich mix of historic and commercial buildings evidencing the evolution of the community and development within the village. Therefore, the significance of the Conservation Area, insofar as it relates to these appeals, is primarily associated with the evidence of the historic and commercial development of the village, including the architectural and historic significance of the listed buildings in Carmen Street such as the appeal building and the adjacent Wearn's Folly.
9. The appeal proposals include a one and a half storey extension to the western end of the rear elevation, providing a new family room with bedroom above, that would link onto the existing outbuilding which would become a utility area and lavatory.
10. Whilst the design of the proposed extension has sought to make it appear as being subordinate to the existing building and sympathetic materials are proposed, it would still be of considerable size and massing introducing an entirely new wing to the building. Despite the contrast in proposed materials with the outbuilding and noting that the outbuilding was historically closer to

the house, the link to the outbuilding would lead to it being read as part of the house, eroding the evidence of its historic function as an ancillary domestic building. It would also represent a considerable addition to the rear elevation, eroding the legibility of the simple historic form of the building. Whilst the adjacent Wearn's Folly has a series of outbuildings and there was historically a further large building to the rear of the appeal site, this does not create significant justification for the proposed extension to the appeal building which has been listed due to its own special interest as a nationally important building.

11. The proposed works, in introducing a new opening to create a doorway to the proposed bedroom at first floor level and the new first floor window from the landing, would also appear to result in the loss of historic fabric from the rear wall of the building. Whilst the appellant indicates that the doorway could be relocated to retain as much fabric as possible, this would lead to an inappropriate level of uncertainty as to whether the scheme could be implemented.
12. Whilst the appellant seeks to replace the existing modern windows with multipaned sash windows, there is no evidence to show how the size and positioning of these windows relates to the historic fenestration pattern on the rear elevation. Furthermore, the proposals do not include detailed sections or joinery details of the new windows. In the absence of such details, little weight can be given to these proposed enhancements as it is not clear how they would affect the legibility of the building.
13. The proposals would also lead to the removal of an internal wall between the existing kitchen and dining room, though the evidence indicates that this is not part of the historic fabric of the building, on which basis this does not significantly affect its special interest. The vernacular elevation design of the proposed extension would not mitigate the harm I have identified.
14. The proposed extension would result in a significant change through a combination of its form, scale and attachment, in addition to the loss of fabric, considerably undermining the overall historic integrity of the building. Despite there being limited public views of the proposed extension, the building is listed for its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and the visibility of the proposed works is not a determining factor in considering whether or not they would preserve its special interest.
15. Whilst a similar scheme for the rear extension has been previously approved and subsequently renewed, there is no longer an extant permission or consent. These previous approvals pre-dated the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') that sets out the current national policy for dealing with designated heritage assets. I am also mindful of my statutory obligations as the decision maker under the Act as outlined above. Therefore, the expired approvals carry only limited weight in my determination of the current appeals.
16. The replacement of the modern rough cast cement render by a smooth lime render, subject to an appropriate methodology, has the potential to enhance the appearance and consequently the special interest of the building. However, this along with the proposals to replace modern windows would

not override the harm I have identified from the other elements of the proposals.

17. The proposed extension, located to the rear of the building, would be partially visible when viewed via the adjacent driveway from Carmen Street. It would also have limited visibility from the private domain including the adjacent dwelling to the northwest as well as from the open space to the rear. Given the harm arising from the proposed extension to this listed building, one of several that make an important contribution to the Conservation Area, and taking account of its limited visibility, I find that it would result in an albeit small amount of harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
18. Given all the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight.

Planning balance

19. Paragraph 205 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of a development on the significance of heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 206 goes on to advise that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting, should require clear and convincing justification. Given that the proposal would preserve the majority of the historic fabric of the building and the extension would be located to the rear, I find the harm to both the listed building and the Conservation Area to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. There is no requirement within the Framework or caselaw to define where in a 'spectrum of harm' the harm lies.
20. Under such circumstances, paragraph 208 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, which include the securing of the optimal viable use of listed buildings. I have taken account of the heritage benefits of the proposal as set out above, most particularly the replacement of the existing roughcast render with smooth lime render which has the potential to provide for a notable benefit to the integrity of the building.
21. The proposals include ecological benefits, although these are minor in nature and therefore attract little weight. Minor benefits would also arise from short-term construction related employment. Whilst the appellant states that the proposals would retain and enhance the stock of family sized dwellings in the village, the existing three-bedroom dwelling is already suitable for family use. Furthermore, the continued viable use of the building as a residential dwelling is not dependent on this proposal as the building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence. Furthermore, there is not any indication that the future of the outbuilding would be at any significant risk should the development not proceed.
22. Given the above, I find that the public benefits would not outweigh the harm that would be caused. I conclude that the proposals would fail to preserve

the special interest of the listed building and would neither preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and would be contrary to the relevant heritage and design aims of Policies ENV1, ENV2 and GEN2 of the Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005, Policy GLCNP/5 of the Little and Great Chesterford Neighbourhood Plan 2023 and the Framework.

Conclusion

23. For the above reasons I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

David Cliff

INSPECTOR