



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2024

by K Stephens BSc (Hons) MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/Y/24/3348847

King's Cottage, 7 High Street, Grantchester, Cambridge CB3 9NF

- 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 Chris Webb against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/04521/LBC.
 - The works proposed were originally described as "One-and-a half storey extension to east of existing cottage and demolition of two-storey annexe."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I see from the press notice that a planning application was also submitted, but no appeal to this has been lodged. For the avoidance of doubt my considerations and conclusions relate solely to the application for listed building consent.
3. As the appeal relates to works to a listed building which is located within a conservation area, Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act) require me, as decision-maker, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the conservation area.

Description and Discrepancies

4. The description of the proposed works above is taken from the application form. On the decision notice the Council has described the works as "*Two storey side and rear extensions* [my emphasis] to existing cottage, demolition of two-storey annexe and internal and external works and alterations to existing house". However, the actual refusal reason refers to "1.5 storey side and rear extensions...and the single storey rear extensions" but with no mention of a two storey extension. The Council's officer report discusses the effect of the 1.5 storey and the rear extensions, as does the Council's appeal statement, but makes no mention of a two storey extension. The appellant's Heritage Statement (HS) also refers to a 1.5 storey and single storey extension.
5. The appellant does not appear to question the Council's use of two storey extension in the description. Indeed on the appeal form the appellant

identifies that the description of the proposed works has not been changed since the application was submitted, which is clearly not the case, but proceeds to replicate the Council's 'two storey' description. In their appeal statement the appellant includes the Council's two storey description as a heading, as well as the refusal reason and its 1.5 storey extension, yet makes no commentary on the difference or discrepancy.

6. Therefore it is unclear why the appellant's description was changed to refer to a two storey extension. I can see from the plans that the replacement for the annexe and the garage would have two floors of accommodation but would be single storey to eaves level. This might explain why the Council used 'two storey extension' in its description.
7. There are further discrepancies with the plans. The Council refers to plans showing a swimming pool. There is a list of plans upon which the Council made its decision. A section plan (2208-114 P2) shows a subterranean blue coloured rectangle annotated as No.6, which in the key is described as 'outdoor terrace with a swimming pool'. However, there are no other site layout or floor plans showing a swimming pool, although there is a reference to it on the key to East Elevation drawing 2208-112 P2. The Council considered the section showing the pool was not valid for the purposes of the application. The appellant's HS and appeal statement make no mention of a swimming pool. Therefore it would appear the swimming pool did not form part of the current proposal. Furthermore, on the east elevation of the garage building, a full height window is shown at first floor with a window at ground floor. However, on the floor plans there is no window shown at ground floor to the garage.
8. The discrepancies with the plans and description of development are a deficiency with the application that creates uncertainty as to the full nature of the proposal. This would have been a more serious issue had I been minded to allow the appeal. Nonetheless, from the plans and how the main parties describe the proposed works, and for the avoidance of doubt, I am satisfied that the proposal before me does not involve a two storey extension or a swimming pool.
9. However I find neither party's description accurately describes the proposed works. From my reading of the plans and submitted evidence, and for the avoidance of doubt, I consider the proposals would involve the following and I have determined the appeal on this basis.
 - Erection of a 1.5 storey extension with attached double garage with accommodation in the roof space to the south end of the property, which is attached to King's Cottage by a glazed link, following demolition of the two storey annexe and single storey garage;
 - Alteration of the rear of King's Cottage by demolishing the flat roof and pantile lean-to sections and erection of replacement single storey extensions together with internal alterations and reconfigurations;
 - A single storey rear extension off the north-east corner for a dining room with new brick chimney stack; and
 - A single storey glazed corridor to link the various elements of the rear extensions and 1.5 storey extension and garage together.

Main Issues

10. The main issues are whether the proposal would i) preserve the Grade II listed building known as 'King's Cottage'¹ or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and ii) preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Grantchester Conservation Area (the GCA).

Reasons

Special interest and significance of the heritage assets

11. King's Cottage is a Grade II listed building, which according to the listing description dates from about the mid-17th century, with 18th century additions. It is two storey, timber-framed with plaster render and has a steeply pitched tiled roof. The 18th century extension to the north has a mansard roof, and probably contemporary with it is a small wing for a shop towards the road.
12. The appellant's HS suggests King's Cottage was subdivided into two dwellings in the 19th century, which may account for the removal of the front door from in front of the main stack. The submitted Ordnance Survey maps of 1925 and 1938 would seem to show this was the case. From the appellant's phasing diagram, the central part of the rear extension would appear to be 18th-19th century, with mid-20th century extensions either side. There are a mix of plain tiles, pantiles and a flat roof, but most of the rear roof slope forms a striking cat-slide tiled roof to ground floor.
13. From the evidence before me, the special interest and significance of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, are largely derived from its architectural and historic interests in illustrating mid-17th century vernacular domestic architecture. The building's age, surviving historic fabric and use of traditional materials and construction make important contributions in these regards. King's Cottage also occupies a prominent location on a bend fronting the main historic route through the village and has group value with other properties as part of the wider street scene, including with the row of thatched cottages opposite.
14. Special interest and significance also stem, in part, from the immediate and wider surroundings in which King's Cottage is experienced. The enclosed rear garden, the side garden visible to the street behind metal railings, and the wider street scene are the main surroundings in which the asset is experienced and its special interest and significance appreciated. Thus the building's immediate and wider street scene settings contribute in a tangible and positive way to its heritage merit.
15. King's Cottage is also located within the GCA. Grantchester is an old village located close to Cambridge with countryside surrounding it. I saw there were a variety of buildings, many of which are listed, of different ages, designs and sizes, built with a palette of local building materials, with a series of open spaces, including the village green, and views of the surrounding countryside. The High Street, on which the appeal building sits, is the main road through the village and forms the historic core of the village. The submitted

¹ National Heritage List for England: list entry number 1331094

Grantchester Conservation Area appraisal² (the Appraisal) identifies a 'pinch point' in the High Street with the appeal building on one side and the row of thatched cottages opposite. This creates a more enclosed and intimate street scene at this point, close to a main entrance to the village at the junction with Coton Road. Houses in this part of the village are smaller with front gardens or houses sited directly on the back edge of the pavement, which I saw the appeal property does in part.

16. From the submitted evidence and what I saw on my visit, the character and appearance and thus special interest and significance of the GCA, insofar as it relates to this appeal, is derived principally from the preservation and legibility of the village's historic street pattern and open spaces, the architectural richness and variety of its historic buildings, and use of local traditional building and roofing materials, all of which reflect the growth of Grantchester. The village also has historic associative interest with Rupert Brooke, the World War One poet who lived there, and his association with the Bloomsbury Group. With its heritage merit as well as its aesthetic charm, and its prominent location in the historic core of the village, the listed building positively contributes to the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole, and thereby to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

Appeal proposal and effects

17. From the submitted old maps and photographs, there is evidence that there was a building to the south of King's Cottage. This was located close up to the road edge but some distance away from the listed building. The appellant's HS suggests it was a separate dwelling. Despite being set back from the road, I saw that the existing detached annexe and garage building is notable in the village street scene due to its pale blue painted exterior and its orientation to both King's Cottage and the road. Nonetheless it existed when the GCA was designated in 1975 and forms part of the variety of built form, but its demolition as part of the proposal would have a neutral effect.
18. The proposed replacement 1.5 storey building comprises two main elements. The part closest to the road has taken its design cues from King's Cottage, with a steep pitched roof, multi-pane windows and rendered elevations. It would be lower than the roof of King's Cottage and set back from the road, almost in line with the rear elevation, to create some degree of subserviency. However, it would effectively double the length of the building and its frontage with the street. Whilst glazing can be used to indicate junctions between older and new building fabric, the small width of glazing would be negligible and would not lessen the overall built form and continuous frontage that would be created. The effect would be to distort the simple and modest built form of King's Cottage and reduce its legibility and authenticity.
19. The second element is the large double garage that would be attached to the 1.5 storey building. Although it would be set back and there is some historic precedent of outbuildings to King's Cottage, in its current form the garage building would present a long roof slope to the street that would be visually discordant and sit uncomfortably next to the gable of the 1.5 storey building. The very wide double garage door would distort the proportions and create a horizontal emphasis at odds with the prevailing verticality of the gable ends of

² South Cambridgeshire District Council 1999

King's Cottage and the 1.5 storey extension. As a result, the garage component would be a visually incongruous addition. The linking of the annexe and garage to King's Cottage would further extenuate the large footprint, bulk and massing of the extensions and diminish the primacy of King's Cottage within the site and streetscene.

20. The proposed pitch roof single storey rear extension to the north east corner of King's Cottage to provide a dining room would extend out into the rear garden. This would disrupt the simple plan form of the building and its roof orientation would be at odds with that of King's Cottage. Furthermore, the inclusion of a tall chimney to what is an extension into the garden would further reduce the legibility of the property.
21. The proposed glazed link along the rear of the property would be a light-weight and modern intervention that would allow the rear elevation of the building to still be seen. However, much of the rear wall of the building would be removed as part of the internal reconfiguration. While this would involve removal of later additions, which could be a benefit, it would also remove historic fabric from the older late-18th/early-19th century wing at the back, including the almost entire removal of the internal and external walls - apart from the removal of some wall pillars on the rear wall - but these are not shown on the east elevation plans. This irreversible loss of historic fabric would, of itself, be harmful. There is also a lack of details as to how the glazed link would be attached to the building which means it is difficult to meaningfully assess the effects these works would have on the existing fabric of the building.
22. I have considered whether I could impose conditions controlling these details. However, in my view the omitted information is vital to understanding the proposed works and any effects they may have on the special interest and significance of the listed building. Therefore, it would not be acceptable to leave such matters to condition.
23. When considered from the street and the garden, the close visual proximity of a large extension and garage would lessen the space around the building thus negatively altering how the asset is experienced and undermining the ability to appreciate its significance. This would notably lessen the positive contributions that the building's setting makes to its special interest and significance.
24. Drawing all the above points together, for the reasons above, I find the proposals would fail to preserve the listed building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. In doing so, the works would harm the significance of this designated heritage asset.
25. King's Cottage is one of a number of listed buildings within the GCA and is an integral, prominent and important element of its character and appearance. It follows that the harmful effects I have identified to the heritage interests of the listed building would diminish the contribution the listed building makes to the street scene in this most historic part of the village. As a result the proposal would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the GCA as a whole and would result in harm to its significance.

Public benefits and heritage balance

26. Paragraph 205 of the Framework states 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. Moreover, paragraph 206 is clear that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Framework paragraphs 207 and 208 set out that, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed.
27. In this case, given the nature and extent of the proposed works, I find the harm to the significance of the listed building and the GCA would be considerable but, individually and cumulatively, 'less than substantial'. Nonetheless, less than substantial harm still carries considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 208 requires the harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. Public benefits, as described in the national Planning Policy Guidance can be anything that delivers economic, social or environmental objectives. Benefits do not have to be visible or publicly accessible and can include, for example, works to a listed private dwelling that secure its future as a designated heritage asset.
28. In this instance, public benefits would accrue from the construction phase of the extensions and the various works, but this would be limited in duration and extent. They could also be social benefits from improvement of the housing stock.
29. However, there is no substantive evidence before me that demonstrates that the proposal is necessary to secure the continued use of the building as a dwelling, or that the use of the building would be at risk if the appeal was to fail. In these respects, clear and convincing justification for the harm to the asset's significance has not been provided.
30. There would be some improvement to the living accommodation for the benefit of the appellant and their family. However, this is a personal preference and does not amount to a public benefit.
31. Overall, the weight I ascribe to the public benefits is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight I attach to the harm that would be caused to the significance of the listed building and the GCA from the proposed works. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, its setting or any features of special architectural and historic interest which it possesses and would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the GCA. In these regards it would fail to satisfy the requirements of Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Act and conflict with the relevant provisions of the Framework.
32. A Section 20 appeal does not need to be determined in accordance with the development plan. However, in the decision notice the Council cite that the proposal would conflict with Policies HQ/1 and NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan³. Together these seek to ensure development responds to its local context, conserves or enhances important historic assets and their settings, including the district's historic villages.

³ Adopted September 2018

Other Matters

33. The appellant has included a number of examples of large extensions with extensive glazing and links made to a number of Grade II listed properties. These are from different parts of the country including Yorkshire, Gloucestershire and the Cotswolds, with only one hailing from Cambridgeshire. The extensions, some more contemporary than others, vary in scale and design, as do the host properties. I do not have full details, facts or the circumstances that led to the extensions in each case. The images do not show extensions being made to street scene elevations, such as is the case with the appeal before me. Whilst the examples illustrate that alterations and changes can be managed to heritage assets in appropriate circumstances, they are not directly comparable to the appeal before me. In any event I must consider the appeal on its own merits.

Conclusion

34. For the reasons given above, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

K Stephens
INSPECTOR