



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 May 2025

by AJ Steen BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E0345/D/25/3359487

The Shanty, 145 The Warren, Caversham, Reading RG4 7TQ

- 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 Jasbir Mahli against the decision of Reading Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/24/0824.
 - The development proposed is extensions and alterations to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In determining this appeal involving a listed building or its setting I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA).

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed extensions and alterations to 145 The Warren would preserve the Grade II listed building known as The Shanty or its setting or any features of special architectural and historic interest (or significance) which it possesses;
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers of 147 The Warren and Riverlea with particular regard to privacy.

Reasons

Listed building

4. The Shanty is listed grade II and comprises a modest boathouse in the rear garden of 145 The Warren. It comprises one and a half storeys with a boathouse on the lower floor, constructed around 1905. It has white weather boarded walls under a thatched roof with a gable end facing the river. There is a timber veranda with modest pitched roof oversailing the river. I note that there are other boathouses along the river, some of which are of more ornate appearance and may be of more architectural and/or historic interest. Nevertheless, the special interest and significance of The Shanty arises from its continued historic function

as a boathouse on the riverside and its simple form in a prominent position which provides an insight into the historic development of boathouses along the river.

5. In relation to the setting of the listed building and the contribution it makes to the special interest and significance of the asset, I have had regard to the definition of setting set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The river contributes to the open riverside setting of the boathouse. The boathouse is primarily appreciated from the footpath on opposite bank and from the river itself. That open riverside setting contributes to its significance. However, the garden of 145 provides an open landscaped setting on the landward side, with the dwelling in the background, which due to its low height and orientation of the roof appears as subservient to the boathouse in views from the river. That contributes in a lesser way to the boathouse's setting and its significance as a heritage asset.
6. The existing dwelling has a low and horizontal appearance, similar to the dwellings to either side, the layout at right angles to the existing boathouse. It is seen in the background to the boathouse in views from and across the river. The depth of the garden means that the dwelling is set some distance back from The Shanty in those views. Due to its layout and the predominant, dark, colour of the materials on the building with treed skyline above, it is subservient in the backdrop to the lighter coloured boathouse.
7. The proposal would largely remodel the existing house with new roof layout at right angles to the existing but not materially higher. This means that it would provide three gable ends and ridges in line with The Shanty. This would result in a more vertical appearance behind the listed building from the footpath across the river. The Proposed Riverside Visual, drawing number 23-14STW-PL-03.2 suggests that the materials would be of lighter colour, albeit other images indicate it may be darker and this could be subject of condition. Most views of The Shanty are oblique such that the altered house would not appear directly to the rear of the boathouse and many views are obscured to some extent by trees. However, this more prominent appearance would affect the setting of The Shanty boathouse in some views from approximately directly across and from the river.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the extensions and alterations to 145 The Warren would harm the setting of The Shanty. This would lead to less than substantial harm to the special interest, and significance, of The Shanty as a heritage asset. The harm would be low in the spectrum of such harm. Nevertheless, paragraph 212 of the Framework makes clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of the heritage asset irrespective of the amount of harm.
9. The Framework states, at paragraph 215, that where development would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The benefits of the proposal in this case would be to provide a higher standard of living accommodation within the dwelling, energy efficiency improvements and benefits to the local economy from the build. Paragraph 135 of the Framework requires a high standard of living conditions for occupants, such that, whilst primarily a private benefit to the occupiers, it would carry limited weight as a public benefit. It is unclear what the energy efficiency improvements and effects on the local economy would comprise, such that they can only carry modest weight. Nevertheless, individually and cumulatively these would not be sufficient to outweigh the great

weight I am required to give to the conservation of the listed building at The Shanty.

10. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed extensions and alterations to 145 The Warren would harm the setting of the Grade II listed building known as The Shanty and there are no public benefits to outweigh that harm. As a result, it would conflict with Policies EN1 and EN6 of the Reading Borough Local Plan (LP) and the Framework that seek the historic environment be protected and, where possible, enhanced including that new development would respect and enhance the architectural and visual qualities of heritage assets.

Character and appearance

11. 145 The Warren is located in a row of houses that front the road and with back gardens reaching down to the River Thames. The river is designated by the Council as a Major Landscape Feature and waterspace. Over the river is a public footpath with views over the river to the houses. The row of houses comprises a mix of styles and designs, with no. 145 and its immediate neighbours being fairly modern houses with the roof pitches parallel to the river. Other houses have gable ends to the river, some appearing to have been recently constructed. Overall, the character of the row of houses is mixed and varied.
12. The roof of the existing house is an unusual design with varied roof lines and angles, with the rear pitch away from the river ending with a wall up to the ridge to the front pitch toward the road. The pitch of the existing roof is essentially parallel to the river. A previous proposal subject of appeal reference APP/E0345/D/16/3163447 was for a more complex design, dismissed for being more cluttered and disharmonious that would not resolve into a coherent whole.
13. The proposed rear elevation would comprise three gable ends resulting in a simple form that would not be materially higher than the existing house. The materials would be timber and glass with a grey aluminium frame and white painted brickwork to ground floor. The illustrative visuals indicate a light coloured structure that would contrast in design with the immediate neighbours. The proposed alterations and extensions would result in a contemporary style of house, using modern materials.
14. Views across the river mean that the altered and extended building would be seen in a much wider context. In that, it would remain lower and less prominent than other houses with gable ends a short distance along the river. It would reflect the materials and design of another more modern house with similar materials located some houses along, albeit less prominent in views across the river due to mature tree planting in the gardens of it and its immediate neighbours. It would be more prominent than the existing house but, given the variety in building styles in the locality and the relatively simple form, it would not harm the character and appearance of the area.
15. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed alterations and extensions would not harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the development would comply with Policies CC7, EN11 and EN13 of the LP that seek development to be of a high design quality that maintains and enhances the character and appearance of the area and would not detract from Major Landscape Features or affect the local character, heritage and visual amenity of waterspaces and their associated corridors.

Living conditions

16. The existing dwelling has a substantial balcony area at first floor level, larger and deeper on the side closest to 147 The Warren. This would be altered in the proposed alterations and extensions but not materially affect the relationship with neighbouring properties. However, the proposal would include an additional floor above the first floor. This would contain full height windows in the gable ends. However, one of these would serve a room, that closest to Riverlea. There would also be a balcony outside that window.
17. That second floor balcony would face toward the rear. It would be set between the full height walls of the extension that would block views to the side. This would restrict views from this area, directing them down the garden. Nevertheless, there may be some oblique views extending from this area and across lower parts of the garden of Riverlea. In addition, the rear gardens of these properties are fairly open such that there are views, albeit long, toward these gardens from the public footpath over the river and from boats on the river. Taking all that into account, the overlooking of Riverlea would not be sufficient to cause material overlooking of the garden.
18. The other parts of the rear extension would project further to the rear and are located between the balcony and 147 The Warren. That would largely obscure any views from the balcony toward 147 The Warren, such that it would not affect the privacy of occupiers of that dwelling.
19. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed second floor balcony would not result in a detrimental impact on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties at Riverlea or 147 The Warren. Policy CC8 of the LP that seeks development not to cause a detrimental impact on the living environment of existing residential properties, including in terms of privacy and overlooking.

Other Matters

20. It is not for me to speculate as to the reasons why the effect of previous proposals on the setting of The Shanty listed boathouse appear not to have been expressly considered during the course of the previous appeal. Nevertheless, I have a duty, as set out, to consider this under the LBCA.

Conclusion

21. I have concluded that the extensions and alterations to 145 The Warren would result in less than substantial harm to the setting of the Grade II listed The Shanty boathouse that would not be outweighed by any public benefits. However, they would not result in harm to the character and appearance of the wider area or result in harm to the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring houses. The harm to the setting of the listed building has resulted in conflict with Policies EN1 and EN6 of the LP. This has led to conflict with the development plan as a whole. As I have not identified any material considerations that would outweigh that harm, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

AJ Steen

INSPECTOR