



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2025

by J Bowyer BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Z1510/Y/23/3326975

28 Home Bridge Court, Hatfield Road, Witham, Essex CM8 1GJ

- 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 Mrs Madison Harris against the decision of Braintree District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01409/LBC.
 - The works proposed were described as 'replacement of front door like for like'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for 'new front door' at 28 Home Bridge Court, Hatfield Road, Witham, Essex CM8 1GJ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 23/01409/LBC and the plans and details submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal relates to a dwelling which is on the site of a Grade II listed building named as 'Bridge Hospital'. I note that the appeal dwelling is not described in the list entry, but the appellant has not disputed that it is to be treated as part of the listed building. I have considered the appeal accordingly, and have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building, its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) ('the Act').
3. The description of works in the banner heading above is taken from the application form, which also indicates that the works have been carried out already. However, the evidence before me indicates differences between the installed door and the previous feature, including in respect of their materials and design. The reference to replacement 'like for like' would not therefore reflect the works for which consent is sought. The Council's decision notice describes the proposal as 'retention of new front door' which would be more fitting, and I have therefore used this description in my formal decision albeit omitting 'retention' which is not a description of works. In the circumstances of the case, I am satisfied that this change would not cause prejudice to any party.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed works on the special interest of the Grade II listed building 'Bridge Hospital'.

Reasons

5. The list entry indicates that Bridge Hospital was built in 1839 as the Union Workhouse. It includes an entrance block facing Hatfield Road which has an archway within a central bay set between single-storey wings. The main block behind has an 'E-shaped' plan form, and includes an octagonal tower with cupola at the centre. Stone dressings, sash windows beneath semi-circular or gauged brick arched heads and shallow hipped or pitched slate roofs, along with a red brick exterior are common to these and other buildings within the site and while the detailing is not uniform, similarities in architectural style and traditional materials provide for a generally cohesive group.
6. Given the above and insofar as it relates to this appeal, I find the listed building to derive special interest from the quality of its architecture, features and materials as well as its social and historic associations as a Victorian workhouse which was later adapted for other uses.
7. The Bridge Hospital site has now been converted to residential use and the appeal dwelling sits within a single-storey section to the rear of one of the projecting wings to the main block. It has a flat roof rather than the sloping slate which is characteristic to the rest of the site and while it is finished in red brick, I saw that the brick is lighter in colour and displays less variety in texture and tone than is typical to the listed building and is additionally laid in a different bond. I also noted casement rather than sash windows, and plainer detailing including window heads of vertical brick rather than the usual flat gauged or semi-circular brick arches or contrasting stone.
8. Given the combination of these elements, the appeal dwelling shares little of the architectural features and quality which define the rest of the listed building and it instead has a more modern, utilitarian appearance. Together with its much lower height and set back from the adjoining projecting wing, this results in a marked visual distinction from the rest of the listed building and I find given its form and appearance that it is clearly read as a later addition. Having regard to these distinguishing features and based on the information before me and my observations, I consider the appeal dwelling to make a generally neutral contribution to the special interest of the listed building overall.
9. The main parties indicate that the dwelling's former front door was timber, but I have no firm evidence that it was in itself of inherent interest or that there has been a harmful loss of historic fabric.
10. The door which has now been installed is a composite with a timber base and a plastic outer coating and is of a 1930s style design incorporating a glazed pane to the top third and three vertical solid panels beneath. However, while this does not reflect the prevailing architectural style or the aesthetic of the timber doors that are characteristic to the listed building, I have noted above the contrasting form and appearance which differentiate the appeal dwelling. The door may be somewhat unusual within the Bridge Hospital site, but it is plainly appreciated within the later, more modern addition to the building. In my assessment, the door does not appear incongruous or discordant within this specific context and it does not detract from the architectural composition or integrity of the rest of the listed building. Nor does it harmfully undermine the holistic approach adopted to the conversion of the listed building as a whole.

11. Moreover, while most external doors to the listed building are timber, they vary in design and fenestration patterns and are of a range of colours. Against this diversity and having regard to the way that the door to the appeal dwelling is read as part of a later addition, as well as its recessive position set back from the adjacent taller projecting wing, I am satisfied that its materials and design do not stand out as a visually intrusive or conspicuous feature on the site and it does not detract from how the listed building is experienced or understood.
12. For these reasons, I conclude having regard to the specific circumstances of the appeal dwelling and proposal that the works preserve the setting and special interest of the Grade II listed building, Bridge Hospital. This would satisfy the requirements of the Act as well as the National Planning Policy Framework which broadly seeks the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets including listed buildings. While not determinative, the proposal would also accord with Policies SP7 and LPP57 of the Braintree District Local Plan 2013-2033 insofar as they are relevant and broadly seek use of appropriate materials and finishes and the protection and enhancement of assets of historical value.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed. Having regard to the retrospective nature of the works and the information before me, it is not necessary to impose any conditions in this case.

J Bowyer

INSPECTOR