



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 22 July 2025

by Juliet Rogers BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 September 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/D1265/W/24/3357605

Wren Cottage, Road Past School, Trent, Dorset DT9 4SW

- 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 Mrs Haydee Wilkinson against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/HOU/2024/03668.
 - The development proposed is to erect a replacement single storey extension (demolish existing) and replace external doors.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/D1265/Y/24/3357603

Wren Cottage, Road Past School, Trent, Dorset DT9 4SW

- 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 Haydee Wilkinson against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref is P/LBC/2024/03669.
 - The works proposed are internal and external alterations to restore, renew and repair internally and externally. Demolition of existing flat roofed single storey extension and replace with single storey extension. Create internal openings and change internal layout. Remove loose plaster and replace ceiling/flooring structure. Renew electrics and refit existing bathroom. Repoint and replace external doors. Replace glazing on windows and install secondary glazing. Remove exposed drain pipes and carry out repairs to existing roof.
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Decision

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

Preliminary Matters

3. In the banner head above, I have used the descriptions set out on the decision notices as these more closely reflect the proposals than the details provided on the application form.
4. As the site comprises a listed building, I have had regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act). I have also had regard to section 72(1) of the Act as the site is located within a conservation area.
5. As the local planning authority, the Council has a statutory requirement to have a development plan and the preparation of the new Dorset Local Plan has commenced following the creation of Dorset Council. As the emerging plan has not reached publication stage no policies have been put forward as relevant to the determination of this case. In the meantime, the existing development plans for the now amalgamated former council areas of Dorset remain in place, in this case the

West Dorset and Weymouth & Portland Local Plan (the Local Plan). Consequently, I have determined these appeals in accordance with the Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Main Issues

6. The main issues for both appeals are:

- whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building known as Wren Cottage¹ (previously known as Failte) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and
- the extent to which the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Trent Conservation Area (the TCA).

Reasons

Listed Building

7. Wren Cottage is a detached, two-storey dwelling, which formerly comprised two, compact cottages in a mirrored layout, believed to have housed workers employed by the historical owners of The Rectory adjacent. It is orientated towards The Rectory, rather than fronting onto Down Lane, reflecting this historical functional link. Whilst the precise location of plot boundaries may have changed over time, the alignment of the pathway between the front of the former cottages and the site boundary with The Rectory remains, albeit the access is now blocked by a garden hedge.
8. Dating from the mid nineteenth century, the property is constructed from irregularly shaped and sized natural coloured rubblestone, laid out in a broadly horizontal, albeit randomised, manner. Its pitched roofscapes have stone gable copings with red clay tiles of differing shades arranged in alternate sections of horizontal and fish scale patterns. The majority of windows in the former cottages comprise two panes in cast iron casements with iron glazing bars arranged in a diamond pattern and set within squared stone architrave surrounds. The position of the openings, including the side entrances porches, are mirrored in the façade, with the gabled dormers either side of a central buttress feature, further accentuating the symmetry of the former cottages.
9. Whilst the official listing focuses primarily on features present in the façade of the property, the first-floor windows in the rear and both side elevations have similar features and characteristics to those in the front elevation. In any event, the purpose of a listing is for identification, rather than providing a complete or exhaustive description of its special interest.
10. Internal alterations to create a single dwelling were undertaken in the 1970s, prior to the property being listed, in addition to the construction of a single storey extension to provide a kitchen and garage. This amalgamation has led to the internal layout of the former cottages being significantly altered through the removal of several dividing walls and one of the staircases, together with the creation of new or widened doorways and the insertion of room divisions. Nonetheless, the compact scale of the former cottage's living spaces remains

¹ List Entry Number: 1154423; date first listed: 2 June 1986

appreciable, given the narrowness of the rooms and corridors, and the low ceiling heights.

11. Externally the rear elevation has been altered through the widening and/or blocking up of openings to facilitate access to the extension. The removal of an outbuilding shown on the Ordnance Survey map extract from 1888 may also have occurred at this time. Nevertheless, the aforementioned external architectural features, details and use of materials, alongside the diminutive scale of the former cottages appreciated internally and externally, underpins the special interest of the property.
12. The appeal scheme comprises the replacement of the existing rear, single storey flat roofed extension with a pitched roof structure plus an entry/dining area link. Given the existing extension is of little architectural or historic merit, the principle of its removal is acceptable. Nonetheless, the proposed extension would be of a height and scale that would visually compete with the compact appearance of the former cottages, despite having a lower ridge height.
13. Although the proposed extension would not have a considerably larger footprint than the existing and is an evolution of the design submitted for pre-application advice², the increase in its bulk and mass would be significant both mathematically and visually. It would not be appreciated as a subservient addition to the listed building as a result and would lead to a dilution in the primacy of the heritage asset. Furthermore, the introduction of an entrance hall link with a flat roof and the use of dark metal cladding, would contrast starkly with the texture and colours of the rubblestone and tiles, rather than enhancing the special interest of the heritage asset.
14. Whilst not decisive in my decision, I also have concerns regarding the effect on the function of the principal elevation, and therefore the appreciation of the former cottages, resulting from the relocation of the main entrance, despite the retention of the porches and the use of false doorways. Furthermore, although no objections to the proposed internal and external works have been specifically expressed by the Council, the Heritage Statement identifies that there would be a loss of the historic fabric of the listed building. As minimal details of these works have been provided, the level of loss which would result is unknown.
15. Nevertheless, the proposal would result in harmful alterations to a designated heritage asset which would detract from its importance, hence I conclude that it would not preserve the Grade II listed building, or the features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses. It therefore conflicts with policies ENV10, ENV12 and HOUS6 of the Local Plan insofar as they require alterations or extensions to an existing dwelling to be in keeping with and subordinate to it, and result in no harm to the local character.
16. The proposal is also contrary to s66(1) and s16(2) of the Act. The level of harm in this case would be less than substantial. Taking into account the scale of the extension and, in the absence of details to conclude otherwise, the loss of elements of the remaining historic fabric of the heritage asset, it is my judgement that the magnitude of this harm would be moderate-high.

² Council ref P/PAP/2023/00657 dated 13 December 2023

17. In these circumstances, the Framework states that harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification and should be weighed against the public benefits which would be derived from it, including securing its optimum viable use, where appropriate. It is therefore necessary to consider the heritage balance as set out in Policy ENV4 of the Local Plan and the Framework. This will be addressed below in an overall conclusion for both appeals.

Conservation Area

18. As highlighted within the Trent Conservation Area Appraisal (the TCA Appraisal), the historical development of Trent has been shaped by its undulating landform setting of limestone hills and the importance of farming from medieval times. This is reflected through the presence of several manor house forms within the village, the clustering of buildings with a functional relationship and the predominant use of local stone in the built form.
19. The significance of the TCA insofar as it relates to the appeal site includes the former cottage's function and position within the cluster of designated or locally important buildings, including The Rectory, in what the TCA Appraisal describes as the manorial or ecclesiastical end of the settlement. Their architectural details, local stone construction and spacious garden area are also features which add to the character and appearance of the TCA as a whole. Although the pine tree referred to within the TCA Appraisal has recently been removed from the front of the site, this does not reduce the relevance of the TCA Appraisal as a whole.
20. Due to their siting away and on slightly elevated land from Down Lane, the former cottages do not form part of the street scene. Nonetheless, they are visible from the lane and their sideward orientation is evident. The relocation of the entry to the property would alter this relationship which would, in turn, reduce the appreciation of the cluster to which the former cottages belong.
21. Whilst the use of metal cladding has been influenced by the agricultural context of the village and its presence within agricultural buildings at Church Farm, Glebe Farm and Ernest Cook Trust Farm nearby, these are all located outside the village. As a result, it is not a material which is prevalent within the residential buildings found within the village. Indeed, there is little evidence of modern intervention or types of materials within the TCA as a whole. The introduction of dark metal cladding would, therefore, be an incongruous addition to character and appearance of the TCA in addition to the former cottages, despite the support of the scheme made by several interested parties.
22. I conclude that the character or appearance of the TCA as a whole would not be preserved or enhanced, contrary to policies ENV10, ENV12 and HOUS6 of the Local Plan. These policies, amongst other provisions, require development to have a demonstrable design quality that reflects the local identity and distinctiveness of an area, including any heritage assets, and is sympathetic to its natural and built form surroundings.
23. The proposals also run counter to s72(1) of the Act, resulting in less than substantial harm to the heritage asset. Given the scale of the proposal and its siting away from the lane, the magnitude of harm would be low. Nonetheless, this harm also requires clear and convincing justification, in accordance with the

Framework and Policy ENV4 of the Local Plan. I will address this in the heritage balance which follows.

Heritage Balance

24. The proposal would provide additional, modernised and functional accommodation for the benefit of the appellant and their family, helping to future-proof the dwelling. However, although unoccupied at the time of my site visit, I have no reason to conclude that the continued use of the property as a dwelling is dependent upon the proposal.
25. Nevertheless, the proposal would provide an economic benefit to the construction industry, albeit at a small scale. During my site visit I observed some water damage to the property, particularly in the first-floor rooms, with some areas externally showing a loss of mortar in the walls and tiles to the roof. Despite this, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal are a direct response to the condition of the building itself. Nor is there justification before me that the proposal would protect and preserve the asset from future decay through preventing condensation and/or water ingress.
26. Whilst public benefits would be derived from the proposal, the totality of those outlined above do not outweigh the level of harm identified to the special interest of the listed building and the significance of the TCA. Clear and convincing justification for this harm has not been demonstrated. The proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the character or appearance of the TCA would be neither conserved nor enhanced. This carries considerable importance and weight, consistent with the statutory duty in the Act and reiterated within the Framework.
27. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not preserve the Grade II listed building known as Wren Cottage and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. Nor would it preserve the character or appearance of the TCA. Therefore, it is contrary to Policy ENV4 of the Local Plan which reflects the provisions of the Framework.

Conclusion

28. For the reasons given above, I conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

Juliet Rogers

INSPECTOR