



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 15 December 2025

by E Catcheside BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th January 2026

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1570/W/25/3371470

The Thatched Cottage, Cambridge Road, Quendon, Essex CB11 3XJ

- 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 William Chisholme against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref is UTT/25/0087/HHF.
 - The development proposed is erect a one storey extension, modify the internal layout and restore/renovate parts of the listed building.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1570/Y/25/3371469

The Thatched Cottage, Cambridge Road, Quendon, Essex CB11 3XJ

- 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 William Chisholme against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref is UTT/25/0088/LB.
 - The works proposed are erect a one storey extension, modify the internal layout and restore/renovate parts of the listed building.
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Decisions

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

Preliminary Matters

3. The two appeals relate to the same site and the same scheme but are considered under separate legislative regimes. I have dealt with the appeals together in my reasoning to avoid unnecessary duplication.
4. The proposal has evolved following the dismissal at appeal of a previous iteration of the scheme¹. I have not been provided with the plans and evidence that were before the Inspector at the time the previous appeal was determined. However, the evidence indicates that the key differences between the two schemes include the size and dimensions of the proposed extension, the siting of the ground floor staircase opening into the lounge, and the double-glazed windows.
5. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).

¹ Appeal decision references APP/C1570/W/24/3342774 and APP/C1570/Y/24/3342770, dated 7 October 2024.

6. The appeal property is referred to as “Thatch” on the statutory list². However, I have referred to it as The Thatched Cottage throughout this decision, to reflect the address in the banner heading.
7. The emerging Uttlesford Local Plan 2021-2041 (the emerging LP) is at a very advanced stage of preparation and is a relevant consideration in these appeals. However, the emerging LP has not yet been adopted, and I have not been directed to any emerging policies that would fundamentally change the approach to the proposal from that set out in the existing development plan. Therefore, I have determined the appeals based on the adopted development plan.

Main Issue

8. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building now known as The Thatched Cottage and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and whether the character or appearance of the Quendon and Rickling Green Conservation Area (the CA) would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

Heritage assets, special interest and significance

9. The appeal property is a Grade II listed timber framed cottage with a thatched roof, thought to date from the 18th-19th Century. The building has a relatively modern side extension which is subservient by way of its height and size, but which nonetheless has fundamentally altered the form and appearance of the historic building through its siting, design, and materials. Other alterations have been carried out over the years, including extensive changes to the windows, many of which were installed in the late 20th Century. The windows lack consistency in their design and appearance and some of the windows have features that do not share the character of the historic openings. When taken together with the side extension, these relatively new features detract from the historic character of this traditional building.
10. Nonetheless, despite these relatively recent interventions, the historic form of The Thatched Cottage, with its thatched roof, plastered walls, and the distinctive gabled dormer, remains apparent from the street due to the surviving historic fabric. Furthermore, the historic plan form and the modest size of the cottage is discernible with three main rooms on the ground floor and additional accommodation in the roof, where the timber frame is exposed. Insofar as it is relevant to these appeals, the significance of the building is derived from its age, the historic plan form, and its traditional materials and appearance, which collectively provide evidence of historic development in this area.
11. The CA encompasses the villages of Quendon and Rickling Green. The appeal site lies within Quendon village, where the roads are lined by a broad mix of buildings from various eras. The significance of the CA is derived, in part, from its rural setting and the variety of the traditional buildings within it, which reveal information about the development of the settlements and the area over time. As a vernacular building from a past era that fronts onto the main road, the appeal site makes a positive contribution to the significance of the CA.

² List entry number 1216676

Effects of the proposal

12. Harm to the special interest of the listed building has already been caused by the existing side extension that would be removed and replaced as part of this proposal. The proposed new structure would be wider and deeper than the existing extension. However, it would be in a similar position, and it would retain subservience to the historic core of the building due to its relatively low ridge and eaves height as well as the set-in of its rear elevation. In this context, I do not find any additional harm would arise due to the proposed replacement side extension, which overall would have a neutral effect on the significance of the cottage.
13. The previous appeal decision at this site accepted that there was a historic opening for a staircase in the ceiling above the study and I see no reason to come to a different conclusion in my consideration of these appeals, particularly given there is photographic evidence to show the floorboards and studs in bedroom 3 have previously been altered. Furthermore, there would be some benefit arising from the relocation of the stairs from their current position, where they interfere with the ability to appreciate the rear window. However, in all reasonable probability, the internal wall between the lounge and the study dates from the early origins of the building and, therefore, there must be wholly convincing evidence to demonstrate an opening through that wall would be appropriate.
14. Whilst the appellant clearly has a strong understanding of the history of this building, there is no photographic, survey, or other definitive evidence before me to substantiate the appellant's claim that the studwork in this ground floor wall is relatively new, or that unequivocally demonstrates the findings from investigatory works behind the plaster. Moreover, there are many reasons why a concrete plinth could have been installed in this location, particularly given the presence of concrete elsewhere in the building and, therefore, I do not find the existence of the plinth to be demonstrative of a former staircase opening into the lounge. I am also mindful that the previous appeal scheme proposed that the staircase would turn into the study, thus preserving this internal wall and, therefore, I am not persuaded it is necessary to breach the wall in order to achieve the other internal alterations proposed. On this basis, there is no clear and convincing justification for the loss of historic fabric and the harmful alterations to the traditional floor plan that would be caused through the proposed staircase position.
15. The repair of the older windows in this building, and the replacement of the newer windows with more sympathetic fenestration would be in general accordance with guidance from Historic England³. The same guidance advises that slim-profile double-glazed replacement windows may be considered in certain circumstances, including where the new windows are of a more sympathetic design and the net impact on significance will be neutral or positive. Given that the upper floor windows are relatively modern additions, and that window U2 in particular does not reflect the style of the traditional windows on this vernacular building, I find this part of the guidance from Historic England to be pertinent to the appeals.
16. The Historic England guidance states that windows can have a profound effect on the building itself, but also on the appearance of the street and local area. Therefore, I must necessarily have regard to the detailed design of the proposed double-glazed windows in order to form a view as to whether or not they would be

³ Traditional Windows: Their Care, Repair and Upgrading, Historic England (February 2017)

appropriate on this building. However, whilst there are brief descriptions of the proposed windows in the Schedule of Windows document, there is an absence of detailed information about the proposed joinery and window design, which leads to ambiguity as to the dimensions, profile, glazing patterns, and appearance of the new windows. For example, there are no scaled drawings of the proposed windows to show the widths of the frames, sash bars, and glazing bars; and it is not clear whether the glazing bars would be integrated or not. I have had regard to whether this information could be secured through conditions. However, without this information before me at this stage, I am unable to make a full and proper assessment of the effects of the double-glazed windows proposed in this case.

17. An inappropriately designed double-glazed window would be particularly harmful on the front dormer window, which has prominence in views from the street and the CA, due to its elevation, orientation, and the framing effect of the thatched hood. Moreover, whilst the windows on the rear elevation would be screened from public views, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent special interest, irrespective of whether any changes to it could be observed from public vantage points. Overall, in the absence of the necessary details before me, I am unable to conclude that the double-glazed windows would maintain the authenticity and the integrity of the listed building. In addition, I cannot conclude that the alterations to the street-facing dormer window would not detract from the traditional appearance of the cottage when observed from the street, with potential to cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA.
18. I note that the Conservation Officer raised concerns about the appropriateness of the fire insurance plaque during the planning application process. Whilst there is anecdotal evidence that the plaque was previously installed on the building, there is no definitive record to substantiate that the plaque was an authentic historic feature of this building. Consequently, in the absence of convincing evidence to demonstrate otherwise, the plaque would be an incongruent feature that would lack integrity and it would erode the special interest of the building.
19. There is nothing in the evidence that leads me to depart from the view expressed in the previous appeal decision at this site in respect of the other alterations proposed, subject to the details of the works, materials, and methods being secured through conditions. Whilst new partitions would be created around the staircase, the historic fabric of the building, including the exposed timber frame, would be preserved; and the other internal and external works proposed would support the maintenance of the listed building, including through the removal of materials and features that the appellant states have led to damp issues.
20. It is clearly open to the appellant to seek to address the shortcomings in the evidence I have identified through revised applications that include the necessary information and justification for the proposal. However, based on the evidence that is before me at this time, I find that the scheme overall would fail to preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building now known as The Thatched Cottage and its features of special architectural or historic interest. Furthermore, there would be harm caused to the character and appearance of the CA. Consequently, and with regard to my duties under the Act, the proposal would cause harm to the significance of these designated heritage assets.

Heritage balance

21. The harm that would be caused to the listed building and the CA as a result of this proposal would be a low level of less than substantial harm. However, less than substantial harm should not be equated to a less than substantial planning objection, and I ascribe great weight to the conservation of the listed cottage, as I am required to do by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The Framework states that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset requires clear and convincing justification; and that the less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
22. Considerable works are proposed as part of these appeals to repair and restore the historic fabric of the building, to remove inappropriate materials, to improve its thermal performance and sound proofing, and to resolve damp. This is a commendable approach, which demonstrates the appellant's commitment to the preservation of the building and improving the way it functions in the longer term. Moreover, given modern day expectations for living space and privacy, the alterations to the layout would help to secure the longer-term viability of the building as a family home. The proposal would also enhance fire safety and would thus help to safeguard this vulnerable thatched building from potential damage and destruction through fire. Collectively, the benefits I have listed here are heritage and public benefits that weigh in favour of the scheme.
23. Further positive weight is ascribed to the public benefits that would arise through the improved energy efficiency of the building, which would help to mitigate climate change for the public good. However, the evidence does not convince me that the works and the development are necessary to comply with building regulations, therefore I have not ascribed weight to this matter.
24. Collectively, the public benefits in this case carry significant, positive weight. However, I am not persuaded that these benefits necessitate the harmful loss of historic fabric from the stair opening into the lounge. Furthermore, for the reasons I have set out, I am unable to conclude that the double-glazed windows would not be harmful, and I am not convinced that they are required to improve the thermal performance and sound proofing of this building. Consequently, and notwithstanding their cumulative significant weight, the public benefits in this case would not be sufficient to outweigh the considerable weight and importance that I ascribe to the heritage harm I have identified.
25. Overall, the harm that would be caused to the significance of this Grade II listed cottage and the CA brings the proposal into conflict with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan (Adopted January 2005) and Policy NQRHD2 of the Newport, Quendon, and Rickling Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2033 (Made 28 June 2021) which, taken together and amongst other things, expect developments to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of conservation areas, to be appropriate to the historic context, and to ensure that the special characteristics of listed buildings are not impaired.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons given above, Appeal A is dismissed and Appeal B is dismissed.

E Catchside
INSPECTOR