
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2025

by **N Praine BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P1940/Y/25/3369257

Providence Hall, The Green, Croxley Green, Hertfordshire WD3 3HT

- 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 P Foster against the decision of Three Rivers District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/1882/LBC.
 - The works proposed are described as the demolition and replacement of garage, extension and repair to the cottage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The evidence indicates that the appellant originally applied for both planning permission and listed building consent for the scheme subject to this appeal. However, only the listed building consent appeal is before me, and I have limited my consideration to this matter. In this regard, I am aware of my statutory duty under Section 16 and 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (“the Act”).
3. The appeal is accompanied by amended drawings that were not before the Council when it determined the application. These appear to mainly show a revised form for the proposed rear extension and a smaller garage. These drawings have not been consulted on and therefore represent new information.
4. I have considered this new information; however, the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme¹. It is important that what is considered by me is essentially what was considered by the Council, and on which interested parties views were sought. Appeals are generally considered based on the scheme and the plans which were before the Council at the time of their decision.
5. The amendments seek to fundamentally alter the design and scale of the proposed works. As such, I will base my decision solely upon the plans that were before the Council when it made its decision and on which parties were consulted.
6. During the appeal, a draft version of the National Planning Policy Framework (“the Framework”) was published for consultation. Having regard to the matters in dispute between the parties and the draft status of the Framework with the possibility of change following consultation, I attach limited weight to it. I am

¹ Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals – England, Paragraph 16.1

therefore satisfied that the interests of the parties would not be prejudiced by proceeding to determine the appeal without inviting further comments.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building listed as Providence Hall (Ref:1348261) (“the listed building”), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

Designated heritage assets

8. The list description mentions that the house dates from the 16th century and was originally a timber framed, 2 bay open hall. It notes that in the 17th century an external brick stack was added and the building was then later encased in brickwork with other alterations and additions. It mentions that the building is of one storey with an attic and tiled roof and goes on to mention its arrangement of openings, windows designs and various other features.
9. In relation to this appeal, the building’s special interest and significance derives from its age, historic fabric, scale, form and features. The building’s diminutive size and scale, its simple, linear plan form and the legibility of its evolution over time contribute greatly to that significance. Furthermore, it is an important example of an early, vernacular dwelling.
10. The building faces the road, set behind a small front garden, with a larger plot at the side and rear incorporating a range of more recent sheds / outbuildings. The wider plot provides an opportunity to view and appreciate the listed building from a range of angles.

The proposal and its effects

11. The proposal seeks consent for a single storey rear extension connecting to an existing store, together with alterations to the openings within that store. A partition is also proposed to be installed on the first floor to provide separate access to the bedrooms, and it is proposed to install double glazed windows throughout. Repair and renovation works are also proposed, including the replacement of concrete roof tiles at the rear. A detached garage is also proposed to the side and rear of the listed building. This would be of two sections: an open fronted garage section and a store. The garage would be finished in Welsh slate tiles, local facing brickwork (to match the listed building), softwood walnut stained weatherboarding and an oak frame.
12. The rear extension would be on the site of an existing detached, modern structure and is proposed to be single storey with a pitched slate roof and mainly clad in vertical timber with a black finish. It would extend out at right-angles to the existing dwelling and attach to the store via a flat roofed link.
13. While the rear extension would broadly follow the footprint of the existing outbuilding, it would link to the existing house and therefore have the character of an extension to the host building rather than a distinctly separated detached outbuilding. This means that the extension would be experienced in a different way to an outbuilding given its physical attachment to the listed building.

14. I also appreciate it would appear to be attached to a later addition of the listed building. However, the combination of the overall height, width, depth, and bulk of the proposed extension, when experienced in relation to the host building, would nonetheless cause it to be read as a significant addition to the listed building. The flat roof link would serve to exacerbate the length of the extension, and the appearance of the extension would be particularly incongruous given the small scale of the existing part of the building that it would attach to. Its eaves would be noticeably higher than that part of the building and would tower above the rear catslide roof. Furthermore, whilst the choice of timber cladding and the flat roof link would add a contemporary element to the design, in this case it would serve to further draw attention to its presence and distract and draw the eye from the host building. The large, glazed opening would also introduce a solid to void ratio which is unlike openings in the dwelling further emphasising its verticality, scale and form.
15. The size and footprint of this proposal would also conflict with the linear plan form of the dwelling, the modestly scaled internal room sizes and layout, as well as detracting from the overall external appearance of this pleasant small scaled listed building. There is no doubt that this jarring relationship would be clearly viewed within the building's wider plot.
16. Considering all these factors together, the proposal would result in a visually dominant extension which would erode and diminish the building's special interest and significance.
17. Limited information has also been provided to describe the heritage impact of the proposed openings, or the proposed alterations to the existing openings, serving the existing store, which is proposed to be a dining room. This absence of information fails to show how the proposal would preserve the special interest and significance of the listed building.
18. The proposed garage and store would be sited in the same location as the existing, to be demolished, garage. Having reviewed the evidence and following my site visit, I agree with the Council that the removal of the existing garage would be broadly acceptable. However, the proposed garage and store would be considerably taller and wider than the existing to be demolished garage. This would result in a visually dominant building which would harmfully compete with the listed building detracting from its setting and significance. I recognise that materials could be appropriately controlled via planning conditions, but this would not overcome the harm I have identified above.
19. Windows are often a key feature of historic buildings making an important contribution to their character. On site, I saw single glazed windows, many had profiled structural glazing bars with glass secured by putty. In addition, several had modest timber profiles and timber sills. The windows range in age and appearance but nevertheless most appear to be appropriate for the age and character of the building.
20. The details provided indicate that all windows would be replaced with painted hardwood, slimline heritage glazing double glazed units which are described as 'like for like replacements'. However, insufficient details have been provided to demonstrate that all of the existing windows are beyond repair or that they detract

from the existing character and appearance of the building. As such it has not been robustly shown that their removal would be more appropriate than conserving the existing fabric.

21. Notwithstanding the lack of an appraisal of the existing units and appropriateness of their replacement, few drawn details of the replacements are provided. There appears to be only two elevation drawings of window designs despite the variation of existing window designs and sizes in the existing building. Furthermore, it is not clear to me whether the glazing bars would be structural or applied and it is unclear whether they would incorporate integral ventilation. Therefore, based on the submitted evidence I must err on the side of caution and conclude that the replacement of the windows in the manner proposed would be harmful to the special interest and significance of the building.
22. A timber stud partition wall is proposed to the first floor at the top of the staircase. While I understand its reversible nature and it would be beneficial in creating two separate bedrooms, there is little information to explain the effect on historic fabric through its installation or while it is in situ. For instance, how such works would impact on the historic layout of the building or obscure historic material. This part of the proposed works has not been shown to be acceptable, and I therefore cannot be certain it would preserve features of special architectural or historic interest.
23. Whilst it is encouraging that works of renovation and repair are also proposed, and the specification demonstrates that appropriate materials and techniques are suggested, more detail is required in relation to the treatment of lath and plaster ceilings, extent of replastering to walls and the installation of a French drain. Further clarification and justification will ensure that there is no unnecessary loss of historic fabric or works resulting in unexpected consequences. The replacement of concrete tiles at the rear with clay peg tiles is welcomed and would better reveal the building's significance.
24. Whilst some of the matters of detail could be resolved through planning conditions, they would not be appropriate in relation to this proposal because many of these details are fundamental to the acceptability of works. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and given the nature and scale of some of the works are unclear, I cannot be certain that imposing planning conditions would successfully mitigate the proposal's impact on the special interest of the building.
25. Some albeit limited information has been provided about extensions to other listed buildings. However, I do not have details about the historical significance of these buildings or how the works were found to be acceptable. As set out above, each case is specific and turns on the unique circumstances of the existing heritage asset and the impact of any works proposed. The information provided as part of this appeal does not give adequate justification for the proposed works.
26. Considering all of the above, I find that the proposal would harm the special interest of the listed building. Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that, when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to say that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification.

27. Given the scope of the proposed works, I find the harm I have identified in this instance would be a moderate level of less than substantial harm. However, this should not be equated with a less than substantial planning objection and is of considerable importance and weight. Where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its optimal viable use.

Public benefits and balance

28. In undertaking this balance, I have taken account of the Planning Practice Guidance which explains what constitutes a public benefit. In this regard, I am satisfied that there are aspects of the proposal that would undoubtedly be positive and of public benefit.
29. The proposal would secure the repair and renovation of the building. These works would help sustain the listed building, secure its long-term use as a dwelling and contribute to the building's long-term conservation. Some works such as the replacement of concrete tiles and plasterboard ceilings would also be works of enhancement. Although many of these improvements would not be visible to the public, they would represent benefits to the public at large. However, the weight of these public benefits are moderated because it has not been clearly demonstrated that the works would be significantly over-and above what any owner of a listed building in a similar condition would undertake. Furthermore, as explained, some details of the repair works are lacking explanation.
30. The demolition of the outbuildings would remove buildings which have limited heritage value therefore enhancing historic sightlines of the listed building and the visual coherence of its setting. However, the positive weighting of these benefits is tempered as the Appellant explains that the removal of the majority of these outbuildings form part of a separate planning application for the site. In addition, I have found that the garage / store which would replace an outbuilding would be unacceptable.
31. The proposal would be beneficial to the appellant's living conditions, providing more functional space, higher ceilings and elements of modern, contemporary living. However, I regard this as a private rather than a public benefit. Moreover, from the evidence before me, I am not persuaded that the extension and alterations sought are a fundamental necessity to sustain the building's use as a home. Even if it was found that additional floorspace and the works were essential, it has not been demonstrated that such an improvement could not be achieved through alternative means, thereby avoiding the harm identified to the heritage asset. Nor am I convinced that the only way to secure the benefits outlined above including the building's long-term conservation would be via the proposal.
32. Drawing all the public benefits together, for the above reasons, I give them moderate weight. However, these are not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight I attach to the identified harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset.

33. I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the requirements of the Act and the Framework and conflict with the relevant provisions of Policies CP1 and CP12 of the Three Rivers District Council Core Strategy (2011), and Policies DM1, DM3 and Appendix 2 of the Three Rivers District Council Development Management Policies Local Development Document (2013). These, among other things, seek to ensure a high standard of design appropriate to local context while conserving and enhancing heritage assets.

Conclusion

34. Given the above and considering all other matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

N Praine

INSPECTOR