



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2014

by Katie Peerless Dip Arch RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 29 August 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/V2255/E/14/2214981

Sharsted Lodge, Doddington, Sittingbourne ME9 0JS

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
- The appeal is made by Mr A Connor against the decision of Swale Borough Council.
- The application Ref SW/13/0392, dated 21 March 2013, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2013.
- The works proposed are a two storey rear and side extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. I consider that there is one main issue in this case: the effect of the proposed works on the special architectural and historic character of the listed building and its setting.

Site and surroundings

3. The appeal property is a Victorian lodge house that formerly served Sharsted Court, from which it is now separated by the M2 motorway. The building is listed grade II and the listing description notes that it is important for being a high quality example of late Victorian lodge architecture. Its plan form remains largely intact and it has modest accommodation typical of this type of building. The lodge is set in a generous garden surrounded by woodland.

Appeal proposals

4. The appeal proposal is for a 2 storey extension to the lodge, consisting of a roughly 'L' shaped structure connected to the listed building, at ground floor level only, by a link that would replace a small rear extension dating from the 1960's. It has been designed in a style that is, according to the Heritage Impact Assessment submitted with the application, intended to replicate a Kentish barn.
5. The addition would have timber clad walls above a flint plinth and below a roof of cedar shingles. From eaves level, the front (east) roof slope would extend down to the plinth in the form of an aluminium framed conservatory. At the rear (west), the 'barn' would include a first floor glazed balcony to one of the bedrooms above a set of glazed sliding/folding doors to the lounge area.

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6. The new addition would contain an open plan kitchen/dining/living area with a staircase leading to a basement study area with a gallery above. Another staircase leads up to the first floor where there would be 2 en-suite bedrooms, one of which would have a balcony looking down to the ground floor.

Reasons

7. The appellant states that the footprint of the original building is 105 sqm externally and the Council estimates that the increase in floorspace that would be provided by the proposed extension would equate to some 175%. The appellant has not disputed this figure but, from the submitted plans, I would estimate that the extension would, in fact, be well over double the size of the original lodge in terms of floor area.
8. This would consequently be a sizeable extension that, in my opinion, would appear overly large against the modest scale of the existing building. The advice given in the Historic Environment Practice Guide to PPS5 (which is still extant as it has not yet been superseded by the National Planning Practice Guidance) notes that new work should not normally dominate the original heritage asset in scale, material or as a result of its siting.
9. In this case the extension would, from all angles, appear large enough to be a separate dwelling, physically, but not stylistically, linked to the listed building. I consider that it would dominate the setting of the lodge and cause visual confusion about the age and origins of the heritage asset. Although the appellant considers that the relative size of the extension would appear similar to a barn adjacent to a farmhouse, even if this was the case which I do not believe it is, it would not be an acceptable way to extend this listed building.
10. As previously noted, the building is a typical lodge, small in scale and intended as an ancillary building serving the main house. It is designed in a Jacobean revival style, with many, well preserved, elaborate decorative details and it bears little resemblance to a typical Kentish farmhouse. The addition of the proposed extension would not give the desired impression of a farmhouse and barn; rather, the clash of styles would appear out of place and detract from the careful architectural composition of the lodge.
11. In any event, the 'barn' would have little apart from its size to suggest that it has any agricultural origins. The large areas of glazing in the form of the conservatory and the fenestration on the west elevation would not be typical of a barn construction, neither would the proposed cedar shingles on the roof. Shingles were normally reserved for more important buildings such as church spires and large houses and would originally have been of oak. There is nothing else to suggest that the buildings were ever part of a farm complex and to attempt to create this impression seems to me to be misleading and inappropriate.
12. I agree that extensions to listed buildings do not always have to replicate the original detailing and a modern solution that is clearly of its time is often more appropriate than a pastiche of the original style or, as in this case, an attempt to recreate another type of historic building form altogether. Any extension to this building should respect its small scale and ensure that it would not detract from its intricate detailing.

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13. The appellant considers that the existing accommodation is very small for a plot of this size and does not afford the space standards expected of modern dwellings. The building is also quite dark inside due to the leaded light windows and the surrounding trees. However, it seems to me that the building could be extended in a manner that was not so disproportionate to its existing scale.
14. I consider that the proposal fails to respect the heritage asset because it would be substantial, overly dominant and have design details that would compete with, and consequently harm, the special character of the lodge and its setting. S.16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special attention to be paid to the preservation of the special architectural and historic interest of the building and its setting before listed building consent can be granted and the proposal would fail to ensure that these attributes would be protected.
15. The proposal also fails to comply with the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), where they seek to ensure the conservation of the significance of the heritage asset. Although the development does not cause the substantial harm to the listed building, or the total loss of significance that the Framework indicates should normally result in the refusal of consent, any lesser harm must nevertheless still be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal.
16. In this case, whilst the increased size of the property might make it easier to rent out and provide a larger income that could be re-invested in the maintenance of the house, I am not persuaded that such a large addition is required to bring this about. As noted above, a simpler and less elaborate solution could be found that did not result in harm to the architectural and historic interest of the lodge and its setting that the appeal scheme would cause. I therefore find that the benefits of the scheme are not great enough to outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusions

17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should fail.

Katie Peerless

Inspector