

Consultee Comments for Planning Application 15/0688/FUL

Application Summary

Application Number: 15/0688/FUL

Address: 142 Gwydir Street Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB1 2LW

Proposal: Single storey side extension and roof extension, raising the ridge height and incorporating rear dormer.

Case Officer: Elizabeth Thomas

Consultee Details

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On Behalf Of: Conservation Section

Comments

SUMMARY OF CONCLUSION:

The application is not supported by the conservation team as it neither preserves nor enhances the character of the area.

COMMENTS:

This application relates to an unlisted building in the Central Extension to the Conservation Area, which was designated in June 1993. The Mill Road Conservation Area Appraisal defines the building as a positive unlisted building, along with almost every other property in this road. There are no listed buildings in the vicinity, and as such the conservation concern relates to the impact of the proposed work on the character and setting of the conservation area.

Existing:

The existing building is a gault brick dwelling which, whilst physically attached to its neighbour to the north, is clearly of a different phase of construction. There is a narrow alleyway between it and its neighbour to the south, which amplifies the point that the property is effectively a freestanding house.

Proposed:

The proposal is to raise the roof, and extend to the rear at ground and second floor.

The ground floor lean-to extension is acceptable, in isolation. It has very limited impact on the character of the conservation area and therefore preserves its character.

The re-fenestration is equally acceptable at ground floor and on the roof of the perpendicular rear wing, as its impact is equally limited.

However, there are concerns. The proposed dormer is large and dominant and, whilst extensions of roofs in Gwydir Street have been undertaken in the past, the development immediately to the south, at no.144 was undertaken following an approval in 1997 (ref.no.C/97/1047). Whilst the extension to the conservation area had been approved prior to this, in 1993, the development preceded the NPPF by up to 15 years. The new Frameworks approach is to analyse significance, and its presumption amplifies the spirit of the primary legislation, in that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.

Additional documents such as the EH guidance The Setting of Heritage Assets have also been introduced, which have helped define and articulate what potential impacts might have upon the character of areas, and in so doing have engendered a more critical appreciation of those influences in historic areas.

More recently still, several Appeal Decisions have been produced for developments in Cambridge which have expressed the view that inappropriate or unacceptable design is not a justification for a continuation of such design. (Reference no.s APP/Q0505/D/14/2229688 AND 2229518) Nevertheless, whilst the dormer is over large, and would notably detract from the significance of the roof slope, a reduction in its volume could be considered acceptable, (subject to scale) as it could help to retain the significance of the historic roof, rather than the modern dormer.

The other area of concern is in raising the roof. The eaves is to remain as it is, but the ridge is to be increased by 943mm, which affects the pitch. In a street of very closely matching roof pitches a characteristic feature of Victorian terraced building and evidence of the uniform use of slate (in itself significant of suburban expansion and the arrival of the railways, which facilitated the adoption of Welsh slate) to change the pitch of a property so notably would neither preserve nor enhance the formulaic nature of the architecture, irrespective of the fact that in one or two instances individual houses present a different narrative. And as such, the character of the place is neither preserved nor enhanced.

The other reason for this concern is the physical scale of the proposed roof, which would effectively tower over its neighbour at no.140a, despite its staggered relationship to it. Views of the property from the street would appear awkward and the difference in the height of the ridges of

no.s 140a and 142 would approach 2000mm which, in a street largely constituted of similarly scaled properties (excluding no.144) would appear a little unconventional: which is something the designers of this street appear to have generally eschewed.

Conclusion:

The application is acceptable in parts, but those aspects of the proposal which impact on the area the greatest are awkward, and consequently neither preserve nor enhance the character of this part of the conservation area. The scheme does not accord with section 72 of the Listed Building Act. It is also less than substantially harmful to the character of the area (para.134 of the NPPF), and it does not accord with Local Plan policies 3/4, (responding to context) and 3/14 (extending buildings).

The conservation team therefore does not support the proposal.