

Plaxtol Borough Green And Long Mill	560210 153962	19.01.2006	(A) TM/05/03348/FL (B) TM/05/03349/LB
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Proposal: (A) Removal of existing rear extension and erection of a 2 storey side and rear extension
(B) Listed Building Application: Removal of existing rear extension and erection of a two storey side and rear extension

Location: Tree Cottage Yopps Green Plaxtol Sevenoaks Kent TN15 0PY
Applicant: Mr And Mrs R Clark

1. Description:

- 1.1 It is proposed to replace an existing flat roofed two storey rear extension across part of the rear elevation with a new rear extension across the whole width. This will have a pitched catslide roof with a dormer window inserted to the rear. This will provide an enlarged kitchen at ground level and also allow the staircase to be moved from the front to the rear of the property, wrapping around the back of the inglenook fireplace. At first floor level, the extension and dormer window will allow the existing shower room to be converted to a bathroom.
- 1.2 It is also proposed to add a two storey side extension to provide another ground floor reception room and third bedroom at first floor level. This will have a pitched roof and will be a continuation of the cat slide/dormer window design of the rear extension referred to above. The side extension will also have a dormer window at the front to match those of the original cottage.
- 1.3 The extension is to be predominantly facing brickwork but the southern flank is to be ragstone to match that of the original cottage.
- 1.4 The rear extension will move the rear elevation back by 2m. The side extension has a width of 3.7m (reduced from 4.4m originally proposed). It has a depth of 5.7m. The front eaves height will be 3.8m (as existing on the host dwelling) and the ridge height will be 5.8m (the host dwelling's ridge height is 6.1m). All dimensions are scaled from the submitted drawings.
- 1.5 The agent has submitted a supporting statement with the following pertinent points:
 - This dwelling has been badly extended on several occasions during its life, resulting in both poor design elements and use of inappropriate materials.
 - This proposal removes any trace of previous flat roofed first and ground floor extensions.
 - It will replace inappropriate joinery and materials.

- The property is so small it is unviable as a residence.
- The proposals to improve the appearance of the building will require considerable funding for dressed ragstone and the increase to 3 bedrooms will make this viable.
- The staircase running up in front of the front windows will be removed and replaced next to the traditional position adjacent the chimney breast.
- It is understood this is a group listing and it is hoped that the design will engender the period design for the group as a whole.

2. The Site:

- 2.1 The property is a late 17th century Grade II listed cottage. It was listed in 1984 due to its group value with other properties in the immediate vicinity in Yopps Green Conservation Area.
- 2.2 The original cottage is coursed rubble stone with red brick dressings and areas of hanging plain tiles and plain tiles on the roof. There are brick/hanging tile flat roofed two storey and single storey rear extensions. The single storey flat roofed rear extensions were permitted in 1980, before it was listed. This extension was erected partly under an existing canopied first floor rear shower-room extension (no records exist as to when that earlier extension was carried out).
- 2.3 The cottage now comprises a kitchen and living room at ground level with 2 bedrooms and a shower-room in the roof void. Its overall footprint is 7.8m by 6.5m measured externally (50.7 sq m) (545 sq ft) and the total gross floor area measured externally is 90 sq m (969 sq ft).
- 2.4 The cottage is prominently sited close to the Lane, on its western side. There is a reasonable sized private garden area to the north and west. There is a garage in the rear garden.
- 2.5 The vehicular access to the southern side is a Public Right of Way and partly falls under the ownership of the applicants.

3. Planning History:

- 3.1 TM/04/02677/LB Approved 07.10.2004
Listed Building Application: Wood burning stove to existing fireplace and chimney liner with four brick piers topped with concrete slab.
- 3.2 MK/4/79/140 Approved 15.01.1980
Single storey extension to rear to form cloakroom, lobby and larger kitchen.

4. Consultees (A) and (B):

4.1 PC: No objections.

4.2 EH: No comments.

4.3 CPRE (Historic Buildings Committee): Objection: Tree Cottage is a particularly fine example of historic Kentish vernacular in a showplace village. The clumsy flat roofed extension at the back has left the overall appearance from the Lane more or less unscathed. The current proposal is in a very different category. The two extensions would take up far too large a percentage of the curtilage and the side addition would damage most severely the ancient character of the cottage by destroying its symmetry and proportion.

4.4 Other Statutory Listed Building Consultees: No responses received.

4.5 Private Reps + LB/CA Site and Press Notice :(13/17S/0X/5R) There are 5 objectors who make the following points:

- Vast extensions will be extremely detrimental to a delightful period cottage.
- Disaster to the balance, proportion and design of the property.
- Plot is far too small for such an enlargement.
- Over the last 30 years, the character of the village (one of Kent's gems) is being gradually ruined by unsightly designs and materials on new buildings and extensions.
- Totally out of keeping with the surrounding neighbourhood and Conservation Area. Permission will make a mockery of the conservation laws.
- This is a small farm labourer's cottage built in the 1700s and lies opposite medieval half timbered 17th century cottages.
- The current occupiers have lived happily in the cottage for over 20 years, so why is the agent saying the cottage is of a non-viable size?
- The staircase running in front of the window is a character feature of a 17th century cottage.
- No need to add to period design of the group as a whole, as claimed by the agent.
- If inappropriate materials were used for previous extensions, this should not have been allowed in the first place - all that is needed is a replacement of the flat roofs.

- Listed buildings are protected for special architectural or historic interest and both the inside and the outside is protected.
- This is not a modest extension but is disproportionate over the size of the original cottage.
- This is a quaint little country cottage on a small plot of land and this will turn a cottage into a house. This is overdevelopment - floor area increase of 75%; NE elevation increased by 33%.
- On the NW side, the original cottage will be completely hidden by the new extensions.
- This is intended solely to sell the property - the owners will leave the neighbours to bear the consequences.
- Dangerous precedent for owners of listed buildings to extend purely for financial gain.
- The PC support is based only on a 3 for and 1 against vote.

4.6 There are 17 supporters who make the following points:

- Tree cottage will be greatly enhanced as there will be a greater uniformity to the roofline and dwelling spaces which are currently disjointed.
- The works will enhance the Yopps Green neighbourhood.
- Extension complies with Plaxtol Design Statement.
- It is modest and subordinate to the existing building. It will still remain as a 3 bedroomed property where so many in Plaxtol have been razed to the ground to make way for large 5 bedromed houses.
- Materials in keeping.
- Unsatisfactory earlier extensions are being replaced with additions which are superior structurally and aesthetically.
- The catslope improves the back elevation.
- The finished building will have better proportions and be of a reasonable size for a single person or couple, at present it is too small and needs to be brought more into line with current living requirements.
- If it does not increase in size, will end up being second home or holiday let which would not benefit the viability of the local community.

- There have been other much larger developments permitted locally that are more offensive to the eye, so surprise if this plan did not proceed.
 - These proposals consistent with desire for more smaller dwellings in Plaxtol.
 - The resiting of the staircase will make the cottage easier for the elderly and small children and prevent its unsightly position across the front window.
 - Inappropriate joinery would be rectified.
 - The application is supported by the PC and there should be enthusiastic endorsement by the Council.
 - The Committee should disregard objections not based on the suitability of the plans and adherence to planning guidelines.
- 4.7 There is one letter of support in principle but which asks for the bathroom dormer to be reduced in size and for the extension not to encroach onto a ragstone boundary wall - the lack of an accurate site survey does not demonstrate if the extension will go beyond the site curtilage.
- 4.8 Revised plans showing a 0.7m reduction in width of the side extension and additional information on the extent of the land ownership have been the subject of reconsultation and any further representations will be included in a supplementary report. The formal period of re-consultation expires prior to the date of the Committee meeting.
- 5. Determining Issues:**
- 5.1 The site lies outside the defined confines of the village. It is in the MGB, the AONB and a Conservation Area and is a Grade II listed building. Relevant policies are P2/16; P3/5; P4/4 and P4/1 of the TMBLP and MGB3 and RS5 of the KSP.
- 5.2 This cottage is amongst a cluster of properties and in my opinion there are no landscape implications for the AONB.
- 5.3 In terms of the MGB, extensions need to be modest and proportionate compared to the original dwelling.
- 5.4 In this case, the original dwelling had an overall floor area of 74 sq m (796 sq ft). The resultant floor area following these extensions will be 153 sq m (1646 sq ft).
- 5.5 It is evident that the scale of the extensions will be more than double that of the original dwelling and therefore are inappropriate in the MGB. Accordingly, the applicants have to demonstrate "very special circumstances" in justification of the inappropriateness and any other harm to the MGB.

- 5.6 I do not place much weight on comments that the size of the property is “unviable”. It is small, particularly in relation to the relatively large houses that predominate in this part of Plaxtol, but the cottage is currently occupied and could continue to be so in the future.
- 5.7 However, Members may agree with the argument that there is some merit in the benefits of relocating the open staircase so that it can be enclosed and thus made safer.
- 5.8 More persuasive in my opinion, however, is the argument that this proposal would provide overall aesthetic improvements in the elimination of insensitive flat roofed extensions which are visually prominent when the cottage is viewed from the south and along the public footpath to the southern flank. However, Members will need to bear in mind that (as mentioned by some of the objectors), works to replace the flat roofed rear extensions (and indeed to relocate the staircase) are possible without the addition of the side extension to the northern flank. Members will therefore need to form a view as to whether the overall size of the extensions is commensurate with any aesthetic improvements to the rear that may arise.
- 5.9 Members will note that the size of the side extension has been reduced in width by 0.7m in an attempt to deal with some of the concerns. I am mindful that seeking a significant further reduction in the bulk of the extension would entail a reduction in floor area that would make the proposed new rooms of a much less practical size and/or configuration.
- 5.10 In this particular case, the cumulative size of the extensions is 79 sq m (850 sq ft) which would be considered to be modest on average sized properties elsewhere in the MGB. Members will note that it is the relatively small size of the existing cottage which will tend to distort the relative size of the extension when considered as a percentage rather than in absolute terms.
- 5.11 I feel able to support this application in MGB terms on this basis.
- 5.12 Turning to the Conservation Area impact, notwithstanding the relative size of the extensions compared to the host dwelling, I consider that the loss of the flat roofed extensions is a visual benefit that means there is no overall harm to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. The impact on the Conservation Area has been improved in my opinion by the reduction in the width of the proposed side extension.
- 5.13 In terms of the impact on the listed building, the rear elevation has been previously harmed by the two storey and single storey flat roofed rear extensions erected before the building was listed. It is the case that the erection of a two storey extension across the whole rear elevation would involve the total obscuring from view of the original rear elevation. The side extension would result in the masking of a small section of the original northern flank of the cottage. However, the front elevation and most of the side elevations would remain as original. The side

extension has been reduced in width and is to be set back from the front elevation by 2.8m. Consequently, there is an acceptable overall impact on the listed building in my opinion.

- 5.14 The list description for this building makes it quite clear that the building is included for its group value only. English Heritage makes no comments on the original application with regard to the impacts on the listed building, either externally or internally.
- 5.15 Members will note from the consultations section that this case has generated a lot of local interest. Most of the points mentioned have been addressed above.
- 5.16 I would remind Members that the motivation of the applicants as to why the development is proposed is not a planning issue.
- 5.17 The PC does not object to the application. Whether that was a majority decision rather than unanimous does not affect the weight to be accorded to the PC's official representation on the application, which is one of "no objections".
- 5.18 In terms of the specific comment about encroachment, the agent has submitted a revised site location plan showing that the ownership extends to include part of the access to the southern side.
- 5.19 On balance, I feel able to support these applications. If Members are minded to approve the applications, the listed building application will need to be referred to the GOSE as there is significant demolition of a principal external wall and some demolition of the interior of the building. The issuing of the decision on the planning application will need to be held in abeyance pending GOSE's assessment of the Listed Building application.

6. Recommendation:

(A)TM/05/03348/FL:

- 6.1 **Grant Planning Permission** as detailed by letter dated 18.10.2005; drawings VJ/RS/6157/1; VJ/RS/6157/2 rev 2 and site location plan date stamped 19.01.2006, subject to:
- The Listed Building application being referred to Government Office for the South East and that body giving clearance for Listed Building Consent to be issued;
 - the following conditions:
- 1 The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission. (Z013)

Reason: In pursuance of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2 No development shall take place until details of the juxtaposition of the rear extension with the southern boundary have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the work shall be carried out in strict accordance with those details. (D008)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

- 3 Any public right of way which crosses the site shall be retained on its existing line or on such other line as may be legally established and be kept free from physical obstruction. (E005)

Reason: To safeguard existing public rights of way.

(B) TM/05/03349/LB:

- 6.2 **Grant Listed Building Consent** as detailed by letter dated 18.10.2005; drawings VJ/RS/6157/1; VJ/RS/6157/2 rev 2 and site location plan date stamped 19.01.2006, subject to:

- Referral to Government Office for the South East pursuant to Circular 01/2001;
- the following conditions:

- 1 The development and works to which this consent relates shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent. (Z023)

Reason: In pursuance of Section 18 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

- 2 No development shall take place until details of any joinery to be used have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (D006)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

- 3 No development shall take place until details and samples of all materials to be used externally have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority, and the development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (D001)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or the visual amenity of the locality.

- 4 The external stonework/brickwork shall be constructed to show a bond to match the existing stonework/brickwork. (D004*)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

- 5 The standard of workmanship achieved in the carrying out of the development shall conform with the best building practice in accordance with the appropriate British Standard Code of Practice (or EU equivalent). (D009)

Reason: To ensure that the development does not harm the character and appearance of the existing building or visual amenity of the locality.

Contact: Marion Geary