

## **UTT/13/2592/LB (Takeley)**

*(Referred to Committee because applicant is related to Cllr Mrs J Cheetham).*

<b>PROPOSAL:</b>	Replacement window
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Beech Cottage, Smiths Green, Takeley
<b>APPLICANT:</b>	Mr R Cheetham
<b>EXPIRY DATE:</b>	18 November 2013
<b>CASE OFFICER:</b>	Mrs M Jones

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### **1.0 NOTATION**

1.1 Outside Development Limits. Countryside Protection Zone. Grade II Listed building.

### **2.0 DESCRIPTION OF SITE**

2.1 The application site is situated on the western side of Smiths Green in a set back position. The property is a grade II cottage said to date from the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is a timber framed and plastered cottage with a plain tiled roof. The existing windows are timber framed and single glazed with glazing bars. The cottage has had modern extensions including a two storey cross wing extension and a single storey lean-to side extension

### **3.0 PROPOSAL**

3.1 The proposal is for the replacement of windows to the listed building. The new windows would be painted timber with flush casement design and would be double glazed. They will match the existing design except that all fanlights will be eliminated

### **4.0 APPLICANTS CASE**

4.1 Design and Access Statement (summary)

Beech Cottage is a Grade 2 Listed Building of timber frame construction, plaster rendering with a red tiled roof. The "Heritage" front portion of the dwelling dates from circa 17<sup>th</sup> Century with major refurbishment and extension completed in 1971 when the house was stripped of its clapboard covering and replaced by lath and plaster rendering with the majority of the beams being made visible from the inside only. The previous windows of unknown date and design were replaced by the Boulton and Paul modern windows; a two storey extension westward was added.

A further extension was made in 1981 across the end of the westerly 1971 addition and in 2005 modification to the kitchen and utility room incorporated new double glazed windows. Listing took place in 1982. This application relates to the windows in the "Heritage" portion of the dwelling and separately from the modernised rear portion where completion of double glazing installation was made in 2013.

We have considered secondary glazing for the Heritage portion of the dwelling. Such an installation would require substantial internal framework to obtain the appropriate gap between the panes due to the fact that the beams around the windows are located internally and there is insufficient space on the reveals. Such an internal structure

would be a major detraction for the historic value of the property due to its intrusion in the beamed character of the living and other rooms in the Heritage part of the house and is therefore unacceptable.

The replacement windows will be specially made, double glazed, timber flush casement windows with lambs tongue moulded main frame and 18mm fine lambs tongue glazing bars, factory painted without fan lights. These units will have significantly better thermal insulation properties as well as being more suitable to the listing status. They will complement the cottage visually as well as providing improved functionality and security.

None of the windows are original they are all 1960's manufactured replacements for long lost earlier windows.

The proposed replacements exclude the existing fanlights, thicken the sills and narrow the glazing bars (as compared to the existing) in restoring some of the historic interest which may have been removed pre to listing 40 years ago.

Beech cottage is situated "tightly on to the side boundaries" but to the south is a public footpath which provides a view of the southern elevation

The view of the front of the dwelling is almost totally obscured from the road (65 metres away). It is only when standing 18m from the front of the dwelling in the front garden can the full eastern elevation be seen.

## **5.0 RELEVANT SITE HISTORY**

- 5.1 UTT/1487/02/FUL & UTT/1488/02/LB: Replacement of side addition, removal of wall in kitchen and raising of floor in new addition approved 2002
- 5.2 UTT/0945/09/LB: Installation of 2 no. rooflights to lean-to roof at side. Approved.
- 5.3 UTT/12/5510/LB: Replacement windows and door to modern part of dwelling. Approved.

## **6.0 POLICIES**

### **6.1 National Policies**

- National Planning Policy Framework
- Technical Guidance to the National Planning Policy Framework.

### **6.2 Uttlesford District Local Plan 2005**

- Policy ENV2 – Development affecting Listed Buildings

## **7.0 PARISH/TOWN COUNCIL COMMENTS**

- 7.1 No reply received. Expiry 23 October 2013.

## **8.0 CONSULTATIONS**

### **Internal Specialist Advice**

- 8.1 Beech Cottage is a timber framed and plastered house of C16/C17 origins, which has been substantially extended to the rear. The cottage is located on a long but narrow site and faces attractive open area of Smiths Green.

- 8.2 The proposal subject of this application is to replace a selection of single glazed painted timber windows within the historic part of the dwelling with sealed double glazed windows.
- 8.3 This application follows a previous submission which was withdrawn, but its content appears to be the same. I consider that the current support letter does not contain any additional information which would allow to view this case in any different light than many other applications relating to the introduction of sealed double glazed units within listed buildings. Consequently I have no option but to repeat my previous advice which was as follows.
- 8.4 Policy ENV2 (Development affecting Listed Buildings) seeks to protect the fabric, character and the setting of listed buildings from development, which would adversely affect them. This policy reflects the thrust of the statutory duty in section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Consequently extensions and alterations to listed buildings are strictly controlled to fulfil the requirements of the Act.
- 8.5 While considering this proposal I have borne in mind that the cottage has been much altered, both internally and externally. It nevertheless retains sufficient interest to warrant protection of its architectural character. None of the windows proposed for replacement appear to be original to the building. They comprise a mixture of timber casements with untraditional night vents and possibly are set within enlarged openings. I feel that even if the existing windows are themselves replacements, they are more likely to have been installed as an expedient rather than as the result of a historically important repair. In general windows are one of the important elements of the character of the listed building. Restoration of such lost features should aim to reveal or recover something of the significance that has been eroded, obscured or previously removed.
- 8.6 In general, the use of double glazed windows reflects unfavourably on the timber sections and profiles that need to be adopted to allow for double glazing to be fitted into a traditional window design. They are unlikely to be historically accurate in their detailing and would therefore fail to respect the historic asset, causing harm to its significance. Furthermore, by trying to adopt a traditional design, but modifying it to suit modern double glazing units, the casual observer may be misled into thinking that they were original thereby further denuding the asset's significance.
- 8.7 I feel that in this case the replacement windows as proposed would cause harm to the special architectural interest of the listed property and would fail to preserve its special interest. In addition should this application be approved a precedent could be set resulting in many other listed buildings losing important element of their character. I suggest refusal of this application.

## **9.0 REPRESENTATIONS**

- 9.1 This application has been advertised and no representations have been received. Expiry date 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013.

## **10.0 APPRAISAL**

### **A The effect on the character and setting of the Listed building. (ULP policy ENV2)**

- 10.1 In considering a proposal for listed building consent, the duty imposed by section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special regard must be had to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
- 10.2 Policy ENV2 seeks to protect the fabric, character and setting of listed buildings from development which would adversely affect them. In general windows are one of the important elements of the character of the listed building.
- 10.3 The proposed replacement windows (except one) are all located in the historic part of the listed building. Although the cottage has been much altered, both internally and externally, it nevertheless retains sufficient interest to warrant protection of its architectural character.
- 10.4 Paragraph 132 of the NPPF states that "When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation" As such, there should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of heritage assets.
- 10.5 Although in the past the historic windows have been replaced with untraditional windows, it is considered that any opportunity to restore the property to its traditional form and character should be taken and that the replaced window should be of a type and style more suited to the building's architectural character. Although the proposed replacement windows are considered to be an improvement on the existing windows, in this respect Specialist Conservation Advice is that the replacement windows as proposed would cause harm to the special architectural interest of the listed property and would fail to preserve its special interest. Restoration of such lost features should aim to reveal or recover something of the significance that has been eroded, obscured or previously removed.
- 10.6 The applicant's comments have been noted in respect of better thermal insulation, however, where conflict between climate change objectives and the conservation of heritage assets is unavoidable, the public benefit of mitigating the effects of climate change should be weighed against any harm to the significance of heritage assets. In this instance it is considered that greater weight should be given to the protection of the character and appearance of the listed building.
- 10.7 In addition should this application be approved a precedent could be set resulting in many other listed buildings losing important elements of their character

## **11.0 CONCLUSION**

- 11.1 The proposal is unacceptable. It is considered that the use of double glazed units would adversely impair the special characteristics of the Grade II Listed Building. It is considered that any opportunity to restore the cottage to its traditional form and character should be taken and that the replaced windows should be of a type and style more suited to the buildings architectural character. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policy ENV2 of the Uttlesford Local Plan adopted in 2005 which indicates that alterations which impair the special characteristics of a listed building will not be permitted.

### **RECOMMENDATION – REFUSAL.**

- 1) The Proposed replacement of the windows would by reason of their untraditional design would be damaging to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. The insertion of sealed double glazed units featuring in the historic areas of the Grade II Listed Building would be damaging to its character and would impair its special architectural and historic interest of the listed building contrary to the aims of the (adopted 2005) Uttlesford District Council Local Plan Policy ENV2 (Development affecting Listed Buildings)