

Appeal Decision

Site visit made 5 August 2025

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An Independent Scheme of Management Inspector
Appointed by the Heritage Foundation Letchworth Garden City

Decision date 11 August 2025

Appeal Reference RR/2025/022

5 Croft Lane, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 1AS

- The appeal is made by _____ against refusal of consent under the Scheme of Management of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for the application submitted on 2 September 2024.
- Consent for the scheme was approved by the Householder Applications Committee on 22 November 2024 subject to revisions to reduce the overall depth of the rear extension. No amendments were made to the scheme. It was referred to the Heritage Foundation's Advisory Management Committee on 13 March 2025 who recommended that the Householder Applications Committee reconsider their original decision. It was reviewed by the Householder Applications Committee on 25 April 2025 and the decision to refuse was upheld.
- The development proposed is: Two storey side extension, single storey rear extension following demolition of garage.

Decision

1. The appeal against the refusal of an application for a two storey side extension, single storey rear extension following demolition of garage is refused in respect of the length of the rear extension.

Preliminary matters

2. The design of the side extension, the materials proposed for the external surfaces, and the fenestration are not disputed. The sole reason for refusal of the scheme is the depth of the rear single storey extension. The front garden store did not require approval under the Scheme of Management.

3. Alternative solutions including reducing the depth of the rear extension and increasing its width, have been discussed by the appellant and the Heritage Foundation but this decision relates only to the application that was refused by the Heritage Foundation.
4. The property is listed Grade II. The scheme has received planning and listed building approval assessed against the planning policy criteria and the requirements of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act. This decision is based on the requirements of Design Principles for the Heritage Character Areas of Letchworth Garden City which differ from planning and heritage policy and legislation.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this case is the impact of the proposal on the character and appearance of the house itself.

Reasons

6. 5 Croft Lane is a small semi-detached cottage in the Arts and Crafts style. It is in a Heritage Character Area and identified as a Home of Special Interest. The Mervyn Millers study describes it as:

Nos. 5 and 7. Architect: Geoffry Lucas (1905/6). Pair of small semi-detached cottages. Roughcast above brick plinth, weatherboarding in prominent dormer windows, roof at centre swept down over original twin porches some original timber windows survive, and some modern carefully installed double-glazed units. Building of Local Merit.

7. It sits on a small plot overlooked by a first floor window in no. 3 Croft Lane which is close to the rear boundary. The plot narrows towards the rear of the garden and is overhung by trees. The existing garage, which would be removed to make way for the proposed extension, is set behind the house and reduces the clear width of the rear garden adjacent to the back of the house.
8. The location of the proposed rear extension is not visible from the road, the gardens of no. 3 Croft Lane are surrounded by hedges and trees that obscure any views from the Lane across towards no. 5. The extensions would be visible from first floor windows of nos. 3 and 7 however, in terms of impact on the character and appearance of this part of Letchworth, I consider that it would have limited impact, and the main issue is the impact of the proposed rear extensions on the property itself.

9. The Design Principles for the Heritage Character Areas set out a number of requirements for rear extensions, these include:
- *The area and volume of the proposed extension shall be subservient and in proportion to the existing house and plot*
 - *An appropriate rear garden should be provided to ensure that an adequate private amenity provision is retained and to prevent a cramped or over-developed appearance.*
 - *Ground floor extensions up to a depth of 5 metres from the original main rear building line of the house may be acceptable.*
10. The proposed rear extension would have a ground print significantly larger than the garage it replaces. Taken with the proposed side extension the developed area of the plot would be significantly increased. Taken together the extensions would not be subservient to the original building.
11. The proposed extension would have a shallow pitched roof that would sit below the eaves of the existing house and it would be off-set from the house by a smaller link, together with the proposed dark finish the appearance of its overall bulk would be reduced but it would still be a dominating feature in the small rear garden of a modest cottage. It would create a cramped and over-developed appearance on the small plot.
12. The rear extension would occupy a significant proportion of the rear garden, the effect of this would be increased by the proposal to site the extension further from the western boundary than the existing garage. The front garden is used as additional amenity space, however the more private amenity space in the rear garden would be significantly compromised with the extension.
13. The proposed extension would be 6.5 metres from the back of the existing house. The existing narrower garage is 5.15m back from the rear wall. It is this length that would contribute most to the dominance of the extension both visually and its impact on the amenity space.
14. The limited space on the plot make accommodating a cycle store as well as additional living and bedroom space difficult, however this is not sufficient reason for a departure from the Design Principles.
15. The scheme for the rear extension is a carefully designed modern solution that differentiates the historic cottage from the new rear extension. The choice of an agricultural roof and wall material reflects the rural location. However good design alone cannot justify the departure from the Design Principles where there are other factors that constrain the scheme, in this case a small plot.
16. The appellant makes the case that the listed building requires special consideration that would justify a departure from the Design Principles. It is the case that the legal requirement for works to a listed building to preserve the

building or its setting, and the Local Authority have concluded that this proposal meets this test.

17. However, it would be possible, indeed more likely that a smaller rear extension would also preserve the building and its setting. It should be possible to have a shorter extension that meets the requirements of both legislation and the Design Principles.

Conclusion

18. Having read the submissions and seen the site and its context, I conclude that in terms of the depth of the proposed rear extension would be harmful to the property itself due to the dominating size of the combined proposed extensions and the unacceptable loss of private amenity space in the rear garden.

Ruth Reed

Independent Scheme of Management Inspector