

Appeal Decision

Site visit made 9 December 2021

By Ruth Reed BA DipArch MA PGCertEd PPRIBA HonAIA FRIAS

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

Decision date 4 January 2022

Appeal Reference RR/2021/012

22 Cashio Lane, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 1AX

- The appeal is made by [REDACTED] against refusal of consent under the Scheme of Management of Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation for the application submitted on 21 March 2021.
 - Consent was refused by the Heritage Advice Service on 6 May 2021. It was reviewed by the Advisory Management Committee on 17 September 2021 and the decision to refuse was upheld.
 - The development proposed is a two storey front extension
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Decision

1. The appeal against the refusal of an application for a two storey front extension is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The applicant originally applied for 'part single and part two storey extension to rear, side and front of property with replacement windows and porch'. The rear and side two storey and a single storey front extension were approved, and the appellant is appealing the refusal of the first floor front extension only.
3. The proposed porch has been removed from the proposed scheme and the style of the replacement windows has been amended to match the Critall windows shown on the original drawings for the house.
4. The assessment of the appeal proposal is made in the context of the proposed extensions and alteration that have been approved, principally the two storey side extension with the continuation of the existing roof line, and the replacement windows which will match the Critall windows.

Main Issue

5. The main issue in this case is the impact the first floor front extension would have on the surrounding area and on the house itself.

Reasons

6. 22 Cashio Lane is a single plot development designed by the architect Courtenay Crickmer, an architect cited by the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation as one who made a significant contribution to the quality of the built environment of Letchworth Garden City. The house lies in a Heritage Character Area and is not a property listed as one of special interest.
7. The house is a late work by Crickmer in the 'Moderne' style. There are other examples of the architect's work in this style in Letchworth. The original house had Crittall horizontal bar windows and a simple rectangular plan with attached single flat-roofed garage and kitchen. The eaves line and ridge are parallel to the road with full gables to the side elevations. The approved two storey side extension would continue the eaves and ridge lines resulting in a wide-frontage dwelling.
8. The introduction of the proposed gabled first floor front extension would break up the frontage and identify the new extension from the existing house. However, it would be inconsistent with the 'Moderne' style which utilises strong horizontal lines rather than gables. As such the proposed first floor gable would be harmful to the architecture of the original dwelling and would not relate well to the original house as required by the Design Principles.
9. On the northeast side of Cashio Lane the neighbouring properties are in the Arts and Crafts style, including an earlier work by Crickmer at No. 16. This architectural style is characterised by hipped roofs and some front gables. The windows generally have small panes and all have prominent mullions giving them a vertical emphasis. The front gables have windows arranged symmetrically within the gable.
10. The existing house is set back from the street on a similar building line to its neighbours, but it does not have a hipped roof and the approved side extension would not either. This makes the house more dominant in the street scene in comparison to the hipped roofs of the neighbouring properties. Adding the gabled front extension would increase this dominance by extending the building line forward through a full two storeys. This would make the development unduly prominent in its context, contrary to the Design Principles.
11. Replacing the existing windows with ones similar to the horizontal Crittall windows used on the original house, is consistent with the original character of

the house but not of the street scene. The Design Principles state *'Matching new and replacement windows with the appearance, style and design of the original windows in the property is crucial to the integrity of the house'*. In this instance conformity to the original design takes precedent over consistency with the street scene, particularly as this house was always different in style to its neighbours.

12. The garage door in the proposed 2 storey front extension is not central to the gable, nor is the principal bedroom window which is centred above the garage door. The incorporation of secondary windows to ground and first floor for the relocated cloakroom and the proposed en-suite shower room, contribute to the asymmetry of the proposed arrangement of the windows. This asymmetry is not in keeping with the gables to the houses on Cashio Lane.
13. There is a tension between being consistent with the rest of the street and respecting the architecture of the original house. The existing form of the house makes it impossible to replicate the Arts and Crafts style of the neighbouring houses and the requirement to respect the original architecture of the original house makes it undesirable to attempt to do this.
14. It is acknowledged that in the terms of the Design Principles, the proposed front extension would not disrupt the uniformity of the front building line, it does not dilute any 'group value' or affect its symmetry as it was always idiosyncratic in the street scene, and the frontage exceeds 6 metres. It would however be an unduly prominent form of development and would not relate well with the original house and the neighbouring houses.
15. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of examples of front extensions across Letchworth. With the exception of those on the same road as the appeal site, they do not form the context for consideration of the proposal. The two neighbouring properties cited, [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] Cashio Lane, do not have new front gables and are not comparable to the appeal proposal.

Conclusions

16. Having read the submissions and seen the site and its context I conclude that the proposed two storey front extension would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area and to the house itself. The proposal is not in accordance with the Design Principles for Heritage Character Areas.

Ruth Reed

Independent Scheme of Management Inspector