

T. Neal Ltd

architectural design – project management



Heritage statement for proposed replacement porch to;

2 Church Cottages, Church Street, Ropley.

Introduction.

This heritage statement sets out the specific conservation area and heritage asset contexts of the site and any effects that the proposals will have on them. The statement takes into account advice in the national planning policy framework (NPPF) and planning practice guidance (PPG). It identifies nearby heritage assets likely to be affected in a level of detail which is proportionate to any identified assets' importance and sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. The statement also has regard to the Ropley conservation area guidance.

Site location and description.

The application site is located in the village of Ropley, situated 4 miles east of Alresford on the western side of Church Street opposite the church. The road has a relatively narrow carriageway typical of the character and appearance of a typical Hampshire village – no footpaths, very few front gardens. The dwellings are predominantly substantial houses with, generally, reasonable sized garden plots. The Ropley Conservation Area Character Appraisal gives a detailed account of the village character and landscape setting and details the key characteristics which contribute to the Conservation Area Status and which is desirable to maintain and enhance. The application dwelling is a non-listed historic cottage facing Church Street. 2 Church Cottages is on a private enclosed plot bounded by fencing, walling and hedging. To the front of the property is small enclosed garden and the cottage is fronted by a small open timber framed porch which is in poor condition and requires replacement.

Background to the application.

The application seeks to replace the open timber porch with an enclosed porch to provide both secure storage and a thermal barrier whilst being respectful of the heritage asset. My clients are expecting their first child and, as is evident, the current cottage suffers from a dearth of storage and, as any parent knows, storage is a major requirement.

Heritage issues.

Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 states that in respect of planning decisions within Conservation Areas – '*Special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area*'.

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, read together with sections 70(2), 77 and 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) provide that the determination of an application for planning permission, and any appeal, is to be made in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) defines the 'setting of a heritage asset' as –

- .1.1. *'The surroundings in which the asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance, or may be neutral'*

Annex 2 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2012) defines significance for heritage policy as –

- .1.1. *'The value of that asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic'.*

Planning Practice Guidance (paragraph 013 reference ID; 18a-013-20140306) advises that a thorough assessment of the impact on setting needs to take into account, and be proportionate to, the significance of the heritage asset under construction and the degree to which proposed changes enhance or detract from that significance and the ability to appreciate it. Paragraph 13 goes on to state that the contribution that setting makes to the significance of the heritage asset does not depend on there being public rights or an ability to access or experience that setting.

The Ropley Conservation Area Character sets out the wider heritage context within which the proposals fall, and identifies individual listed buildings and 'positive' buildings. These have to be taken into account in determining the effects of the new development.

Planning policy

The saved policies of EHDC District Local Plan; saved policies have some, but more limited weight.

General Policy for Development, countenances proposals for development which meet a wide range of criteria including the provision for the conservation or enhancement of the districts landscapes, ecology and historic heritage and natural resources.

Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows; Amenity Value, indicates that in development proposals such features which are of significant landscape or amenity value should be retained or replaced.

Conservation Areas – General Policy, states that 'Proposals for development which fail to meet the objectives of conserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a designated Conservation Area will not be permitted'.

Definition of Areas Covered by RUR Policies, lists a number of rural settlements to which the policies apply. Ropley is specified as such a rural settlement.

Renovation and Extension of Existing Dwellings, indicates that extensions to dwellings in the countryside will be permitted where (ii) that the extension does not materially change the impact of the dwelling on the countryside or result in a disproportionately sized extension in relation to the original dwelling.

NPPF para 14; *'At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development which should be seen as a golden thread running through both plan making and decision taking. For decision takers this means that 'where the development plan is absent, silent or relevant policies are out of date, granting planning permission unless:*

- .1.1. *Any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this framework indicate development should be restricted'.*

Paras. 126 to 141 of the NPPF, which are repeated in Section 12 of Planning Practice Guidance, clearly state the government's commitment to conserving and enhancing the historic environment and the importance of preserving heritage assets. In that context, development proposals which involve harm to, or loss of such assets should not be permitted.

Heritage assets.

The Ropley Conservation Area was designated in August 1976 and sets out the background to designation and assesses the most significant features of heritage interest including statutory listed buildings, non-listed buildings and features of interest. It also describes the character of the Conservation Area and its various parts along with the special qualities experienced as a result of the relationship between spaces, buildings and views of surrounding countryside.

Assessment and evaluation.

In heritage terms, the principle issue relates to the effects of the proposed works on the appearance of the dwelling itself in the context of the Conservation Area and other heritage assets.

The proposed porch which, if it were to follow the adjacent porches, could in a reality be a simple brick built porch with a pitched roof – however – my clients have opted for a more visually respectful design that 'borrows' from the construction of the church bell tower opposite. The proposed porch has a small brick plinth upon which a timber framed Oak clad porch is constructed. The roof is clad with traditional Welsh slate with a terracotta ridge for contrast.

The proposed development which is relatively insignificant in itself would preserve the setting of nearby heritage assets (listed buildings and 'positive' buildings), as the distance from any of these identified buildings is such that no impact whatsoever can be identified. The proposals therefore comply with the requirements of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The proposals would also have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the area and would therefore preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area in accordance with the test imposed by Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.