North Hertfordshire District Council
Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 18/00944/LBC
Date: 20/07/2018
Planning Officer: SD
Address: 35 High Street, Barkway, Royston SG8 8EA
Subject: Two storey and single storey rear extensions; internal and external alterations. Part removal of boundary wall.

Nos.33 & 35 High Street are grade II listed and are located within the Barkway Conservation Area. Both properties are covered by the single list entry which reads as follows:

Pair of houses. Mid C19. Timber frame on brick base, rendered. Tiled roof with decorative fishscale bands, crest tiles. No. 33 to left is 2 bays, No. 35 to right 3 bays. 2 storeys. Cement rendered plinth. Steps up to central entrances with plank and muntin doors in chamfered surrounds, raking bracketed slate hoods. 3 light flush frame lattice casements with cornices, an extra single light to left of entrance to No. 35. First floor similar windows, 2 lights to No. 33 and to centre on No. 35. Ridge stacks with oversailing caps between dwellings and extruded at ends with offsets. Similar casements on gable ends with brackets to bargeboards. Short lower 2 storey gabled wing to rear left with a stack. Attached to left a later C19 1 storey red brick, slate roofed outshut, formerly a shoemaker's workshop, with an entrance and a canted oriel window. To rear centre a slate roofed lean-to addition. To rear right a C20 gabled range. Interior not inspected. Included for group value.

The C20 rear addition relates to planning permission ref: 1/624/82 and followed a strong recommendation to refuse an earlier iteration under this reference. This scheme preceded listing by 5 years, hence no LB application.

The Principal Conservation Officer at that time considered the earlier iteration (a large ungainly extension with a poorly designed roof) to *be 'totally unacceptable',* whereby the *'rear roof would be readily visible from the High Street and would have the effect of dwarfing the original building whose slender and well proportioned gable end is an element in the visual counterpoint of the conservation area'.* The PCO recommended a *'double roof'* and that the first floor windows match in size and sub-division those on the front elevation. Furthermore the PCO stated that the ground floor fenestration is *'totally unacceptable'*.

The double roof is a traditional method of achieving more floor space and the 1980's addition does not, in my opinion, harm the listed building's special character when viewed from the side. In fact, my considered opinion is that the extension's form and first floor rear fenestration, peg tile roof and decorative ridge make a positive contribution and one might be forgiven for perceiving this to be an earlier structure. Importantly, this addition sits flush with the rear building line of the adjacent lean-to and the rear gable projection at no.33. None of the three rear elements compete with or indeed harm the earlier host building. Nos.33 & 35 form an essentially mid C19 linear pairing and the south gable end of the 1980's addition to no.35 as viewed in the photo below, maintains this linear form.

The fact that the proposed extension would not affect historic fabric, my attention principally turns to that of design including bulk, form, fenestration, materials etc. The two-storey extension would be formed with two equal-width rear gables and would project 2600mm from the existing rear elevation. When considered in conjunction

with the 1980's addition the depth of late C20 and early C21 additions would measure almost 6m (cannot measures precisely from submitted plans). In comparison, the depth of the original cottages is just over 4m.

The 1980's addition provided two additional bedrooms at first floor and a lounge and enlarged kitchen area at ground floor. The current proposal would serve to enlarged both of these bedrooms and provide a breakfast area/WC and utility at ground floor.

The depth, height and form of the 1980's addition ensure that it is subservient and complementary to, the host building. My concerns are that not only will the first floor element of the two-storey extension adversely affect the linear form of the host building by forming a double-gabled addition which would sit perpendicular to the host building (perhaps giving the perception of a 'house behind a house'), but the cumulative impact of successive extensions will also reverse the subservient role currently offered by the existing extension. The original earlier section would effectively then become either an equal or subservient element to the later additions. The impact of which, would in my opinion, occasion harm to the listed building, the setting of no.33 and the appearance of the conservation area.





It is noted that the two-storey extension serves an additional purpose, this being that the side elevation provides a sufficiently tall wall on which the utility lean-to would bear. Without this, the form of the weatherboarded section would need to be redesigned. There is another issue with respect to the lean-to, this being that the proposed roof lights in the existing slate roof lean-to need to be set higher than it is understood, the applicant was envisaging. However, to set the roof lights lower (in particular the left hand one) would, once again, require a different roof form to the weatherboarded section. In my opinion, the position of the utility lean-to would, in principle, harm the contribution made by the existing slate lean-to. I am prepared to support the addition of 2no. slightly smaller roof lights placed further down the roof so that internally they sit equidistant between the flat roof ceiling and the lower wall plate.

I consider that neither no.33 or no.35 can receive a first floor extension without occasioning harm to the listed building's special interest and that the first floor lattice windows in the rear of the extension at no.35 should remain part of this building's external appearance due to their positive contribution. Paragraph 132 of the NPPF requires 'convincing justification' and the proposal to enlarge two bedrooms created in the 1980's does not, in my opinion, constitute a convincing justification. With this in mind, there would be no reason to insert the stud partition at first floor and 'open up' the landing area.

There is scope, however, to perhaps enlarge the rear lounge and provide either a breakfast area or a WC/Utility. However, if this to receive a pitched roof and if the junction with the 1980's extension is to sit below the first floor window sills, then a slate roof only may be achievable due to the shallow roof pitch. Furthermore, the extension depth may need reducing. The alternative would be an incongruous flat roof addition which I would not be prepared to support.

If the currently proposed WC/Utility is omitted and relocated to where the breakfast area is shown then there would be no need for bi-fold doors in this location. I advise that consideration is given to omitting the bi-folds and perhaps introducing a pair of French doors to the lounge extension.

Part removal of boundary wall
This section of wall pre-dates 1st July 1948 and is, therefore, regarded as curtilage-listed. The wall is extensively covered with ivy but from my site inspection I noted what appeared to be a series of flush brick arches/vaulted details within the brickwork on the north face. Until the ivy has been cut back and this wall better surveyed (applicant to provide the LPA with photos) a decision cannot be taken as to the significance of this wall. My initial thoughts, however, are that the wall should be retained.

Recommendation
It is considered that both extensions will harm the building's special character and harm the appearance of the Barkway Conservation Area. I, therefore, raise an **OBJECTION** on the basis that the proposal will fail to satisfy Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and as supported by the aims of Sections 7 and 12 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (Proposed Submission, October 2016). The two-storey extension would constitute poor design and paragraph 64 of the NPPF states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions. The proposal would also not make a positive contribution to local character, hence would be contrary to the aims of paragraph 131. The degree of harm would be less than substantial but there are no discernible public benefits to outweigh this harm that would satisfy paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

Mark Simmons
Senior Conservation Officer