

# North Hertfordshire District Council

## Building Conservation comments

**File Ref:** 25/00088/FPH & 25/00089/LBC

**Date:** 28/03/2025

**Planning Officer:** AH

**Address:** Glebe Cottage, Church Lane, Weston, Hitchin Hertfordshire SG4 7DJ

**Subject:** See below

- **25/00088/FPH** - Rear extension with habitable accommodation in roofspace.
- **25/00089/LBC** - Rear extension with habitable accommodation in roofspace and associated internal alterations.

### 1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 I have attached great weight to this asset's conservation, and I have previously sought to ensure that any extension proposal is sympathetic to local character and history and makes a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness. Glebe Cottage's significance is derived in part by its architectural/ historic interest, principally its date of construction, vernacular appearance (thatched roof), method of construction (timber frame) and that it may well have associative meaning to the community from their collective experience of the place/environs near the church.
- 1.2 The cumulative impact of extensions will by reason of form, length and bulk, harm Glebe Cottage's special character and will also harm the character and appearance of the Weston Conservation Area. In addition, there is no convincing justification for the study or additional 5<sup>th</sup> bedroom. The proposal therefore fails to satisfy the provisions of Sections 16(2) (LBC only) and 66(1) (FPH only) and 72(1) (both) of the Planning (LB & CA) Act 1990 and will fail to accord with Section 16 of the Framework or Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031. The degree of harm would be moderate/high on the less than substantial harm continuum. There are no public benefits of the proposal to outweigh this harm, and the building already possesses an optimum viable use. The proposal is therefore **OBJECTIONABLE** in heritage terms.

### 2.0 The Local Plan and NPPF (Dec 2024)

- 2.1 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 is relevant as are the following paragraphs of the NPPF:
- **135 c)** (sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment),
  - **207** (local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting)
  - **210** (desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness),
  - **212** (great weight should be given to the asset's conservation),
  - **213** (clear and convincing justification), and
  - **215** (harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use).

### 3.0 Context

- 3.1 This is a relatively 'tucked away' spot in the Weston Conservation Area which, apart from the application property, also includes the Church of the Holy Trinity (grade I) and Church Gate and Cottage by the Church (two properties forming a single grade II list entry).
- 3.2 Glebe Cottage is grade II listed. Both the building and the conservation area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The list entry for Glebe Cottage reads as follows:

***House. C17 or earlier. Timber frame on low stuccoed sill, roughcast with very steep pitched thatched roof and decorative ridge. A 2-storey, 3 windows wide house with long front garden facing W. Small single-storey N extension with slate roof and 2-light casement window. Dark weatherboarded N gable to main house and small gabled thatched porch to entrance beside large N gable internal chimney of narrow red brick. Old 2-lights leaded casement over porch at LH end of front. 3- and 2-lights flush casement windows. Plank door in porch. Interior has exposed frame and ceiling beams.***

- 3.3 In 2021 and 2022, the following applications were approved:

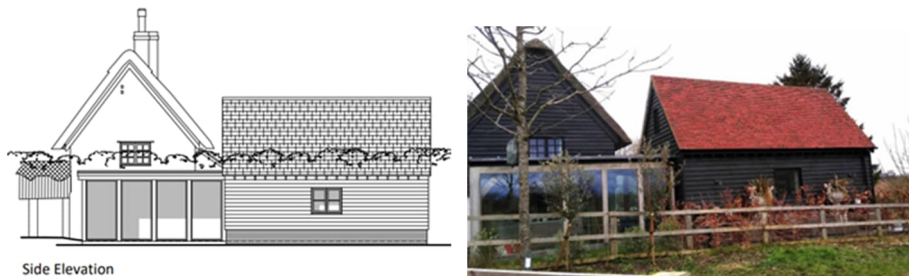
- **21/01263/FPH** - Single storey rear extension. Single-storey side/rear linked extension (as amended by drawing nos. PL.005E; - 06G; -07F; -08L and -09J received on 02/09/2021).  
**CP 11.10.2021**
- **21/01264/LBC** - Single storey rear extension. Single-storey side/rear linked extension. Re-rendering, external alterations including replacement windows and internal alterations (as amended by drawing nos. PL.005E; - 06G; -07F; - 08L and -09J received on 02/09/2021).  
**CCON 14.10.2021**
- **22/02346/FPH** - Erection of front porch following demolition of existing porch (as amended by plans received 13th October 2022).  
**CP 25.10.2022**
- **22/02347/LBC** - Erection of front porch following demolition of existing porch (as amended by plans received 13th October 2022).  
**CCON 25.10.2022**



- 3.4 With reference to the NPPF I previously took the view that the original submission under refs: 21/01263/FPH & 21/01264/LBC (see below) would have resulted in a disproportionate and harmful addition to the listed building.



- 3.5 Much officer time and effort were given to ensuring that the scheme consented in 2021 was appropriate to its context and did not harm the host building or the character or appearance of the WCA (see below). The shorter, lower tiled building is certainly substantially better than what was originally proposed but the extension at both ends of this vernacular cottage have a transforming quality that in my opinion has reached the limits of acceptability.



#### 4.0 The Proposal

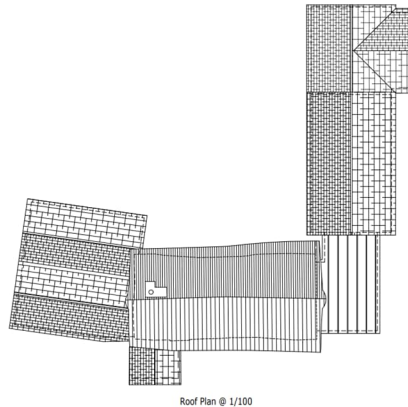
- 4.1 Prior to the implementation of the 2021 consented scheme, the cottage had two first-floor bedrooms with a kitchen located in the slate roof addition at the northern end of the cottage. The 2021 scheme allowed for the enlargement of the northern addition to facilitate two ground-floor bedrooms whilst at first floor the two bedrooms remained. The property was a 2-bed and is now a 4-bed with aspirations for it to become a 5-bed as the latest proposal would facilitate a further bedroom in the extension to the existing extension. In my opinion, the resulting cumulative impact would lead to a disproportionate addition to the listed building.



- 4.2 Under the 'Conclusion' of the submitted Design and Heritage Statement it says:

*The proposal will allow for the house to accommodate an additional family member. The proposal is small, subservient and in keeping with the existing. The proposal does not impact on the heritage asset. There are similar examples of extensions to listed building within the village. The proposal should be supported by the council.*

Although not directly affecting historic fabric the cumulative impact of the two weatherboarded extensions would not be 'small, subservient and in keeping with the existing'. In fact, the cumulative impact is no more apparent than when looking at the roof plan and the right hand extension could be said to be the 'tail wagging the dog'. I conclude that the latest proposal would result in a cumulative impact that is large, dominant and not in keeping or subservient to the host building.



## **5.0 Conditions relating to past permission /consents**

- 5.1 It should be noted that AOD applications for sample tiles (Condition 3) and slates (Condition 4) pursuant to ref: 21/01264/LBC were not submitted and had this been the case I may have offered a view on the the slightly strident tile choice. Furthermore, no AOD application was submitted for Condition 8 (window details) relating to the same application. It is also unclear from the planning file as to the 'status' of Conditions 3,4 and 5 (all archaeology) relating to to ref: 21/01263/FPH.
- 5.2 It is also noted that AOD applications were not submitted for Conditions 3 and 4 for the front porch under ref: 22/02347/LBC (see below):

### **Condition 3**

*The tiles for the porch roof shall either match an approved tile sample pursuant to Condition 3 of application ref: 21/01264/LBC or if details have not been received by the time the porch works are due to commence then a sample of the handmade clay tiles shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the works to the new porch commencing on site. The porch roof shall then be covered with tiles in accordance with the approved sample/details.*

### **Condition 4**

*Joinery section details of the porch window (including 1:1 scale glazing bar profile) together with method opening (if applicable), shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of that part of the development hereby consented. The window shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.*

**Mark Simmons**  
**Senior Conservation Officer**