

North Hertfordshire District Council

Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 24/01859/FPH & 24/01860/LBC

Date: 28/11/2024

Planning Officer: TR

Address: Pencroft, Maiden Street, Weston, Hitchin, Hertfordshire SG4 7BG

Subject: Single storey rear extension and alterations to existing rear extension roof following demolition of existing conservatory. Internal and external alterations.

1.0 Recommendation

- 1.1 Whilst I support the principle of what is being sought here, I await feedback to the points raised before offering a final recommendation.

2.0 Context

- 2.1 Pencroft is grade II listed (added to the Statutory List of Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest on 28 May 1987) and is located within the Weston Conservation Area. Both the building and area are Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 16 of the NPPF. The list entry reads as follows:

House. C18. Timber frame on low black painted sill, roughcast with steep pitched thatch roof, half-hipped at W end, and with fancy ridge. Tiled roofs to low extensions at E and W ends. A 3-cells, internal chimney, 1 1/2-storeys house, set back from road, facing N. Internal chimney with one flue a third from W end, and a single-flue projecting E gable chimney. N front has 2 flush 2-lights casement windows on each side of central entrance. 4-panels flush-beaded door in gabled thatched porch.



3.0 The Local Plan and NPPF

- 3.1 Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 – 2031 is relevant as are the following paragraphs of the NPPF:

- **200** (local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting)
- **203** (desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness),
- **205** (great weight should be given to the asset's conservation),
- **206** (clear and convincing justification), and
- **208** (harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use).

4.0 The Proposal

4.1 The submitted Heritage Statement says:

*Single-storey extensions have been added to both ends of the building together with a rear conservatory. **Historic mapping indicates that these extensions were all carried out prior to listing in 1987; likely between 1960 and 1975 based on historic mapping.** Whilst not particularly complimentary to the character and form of the existing building, they are modest in terms of their height and do not significantly detract from the buildings main attributes. Indeed, had they been significantly detrimental, one assumes that the property would not have been listed. That being said, **it would appear that the rear extension involved cutting into and removing the bottom section of thatch at the rear towards the eastern end.** Otherwise, it appears that these extensions were built around the original structure meaning that the original walls, chimney stack and general form of the building is largely intact.*

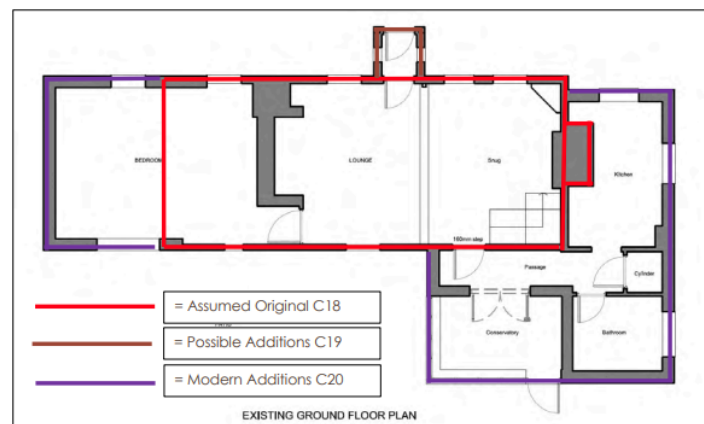
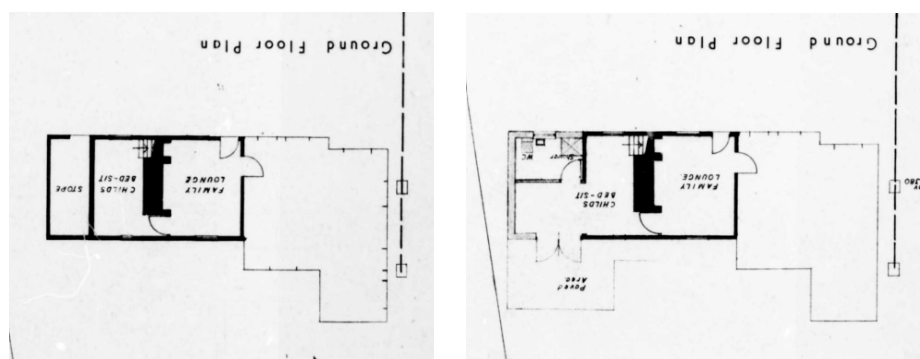
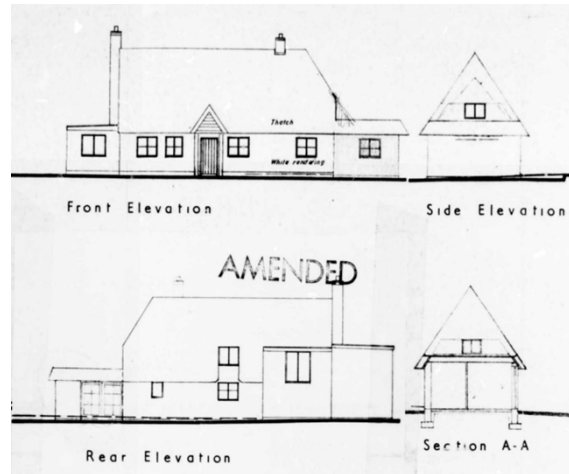


Figure 4 – Assumed Building Phases Existing Building

- 4.2 The above, in my opinion, requires just a little unpicking based on the existing and proposed ground floor plans submitted under ref: 74/00549/1 for a single-storey side extension. I have intentionally turned these plans upside down to read more easily alongside Fig 4 above. Part of the building is only shown in thin outline on the 1974 plans as this part of the building was not affected by the proposal. I agree with the view that the side extensions (except for the conservatory) existed in 1974 i.e. pre-listing. There is no planning history for the conservatory which may be unauthorised and does not appear on either ref: 74/00549/1 or 79/00140/1. It would certainly have required LBC if built post May 1987. Having said that, I raise no objection to its demolition.



- 4.3 As noted on the 1974 elevation drawings below, there seems to be a drafting error with the height of the right-hand addition as viewed from the rear, which is too high.

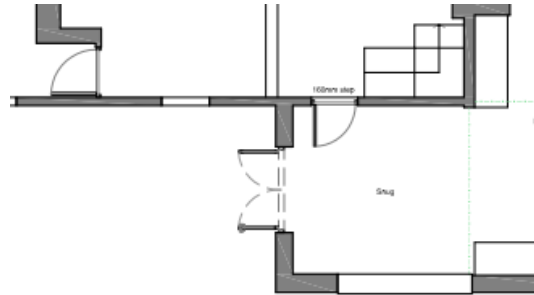


- 4.4 I raise no objection to the principle of creating a modest, pitched-roof, single-storey rear/side addition, however, I question the detailing. For instance, as stated above, the conservatory may be unauthorised and incorporates poorly detailed windows and door. The proposed rear elevation indicates what looks like the reuse of the window with its top-hung vent style windows and stormproof openings. Substituting this window for let's say a three-light window with flush casements and glazing bars (even if a single, horizontal, through-bar only is introduced) with a slimlite system will enhance this elevation. The single glazing bar finish would complement existing windows at the house.



- 4.5 The appearance of the gable end doors on the proposed elevation suggests that these are intended to be a modern three-door, bi-fold set but this does not sit with the ground floor plan (see below) which shows a pair of conventional outward opening doors. My view is that a pair of doors works

better here and echoes the pair of doors on the rear elevation at the other end of the house. Considering my comment regarding potentially using a single, horizontal, through-bar to a new snug, three-light window, maybe this pair of doors (if it is to be a pair) could have two, horizontal, through-bars equally spaced.



PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN

- 4.6 My initial thoughts were to encourage the use of weatherboard for the pitched roof section of the rear addition to perhaps appear more like an established outbuilding (which I think could work quite effectively). However, if this is not positively received by the applicant then perhaps half-boarding i.e. the apex could have a positive impact and would ease the amount of render on the side elevation. Even a downpipe appropriately positioned at the junction between flat and pitched roof elements would serve to define the gable width. Furthermore, considering that this side/rear addition would become a singular internal space, I also suggest replacing the side elevation window below with a double-casement window of the same spec as mentioned at 4.4 above.



PROPOSED REAR EAST EXTENSION

Mark Simmons
Senior Conservation Officer