

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION OLD HAMMERS MILL END RUSHDEN

INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared in support of a proposal to extend a house known as Old Hammers located at Mill End in the village of Rushden in North Hertfordshire.

Old Hammers is a Grade 2 listed Building.

This statement describes the heritage asset and assesses the impact of the proposed extension on the fabric and character of the listed building within its setting.

DESCRIPTION

Old Hammers is a detached house located at Mill End within the settlement of Rushden. There are several listed buildings to the south of the site, including a public house, The Moon and Stars, currently undergoing substantial alteration and extension, but with more recent dwellings to the west and north. To the east is the upper River Beane watercourse and beyond that open parkland.

The application building lies about 0.5km outside of the Rushden Conservation Area.

The house currently has three bedrooms and a bathroom to the first floor with a kitchen, dining room and sitting room to the ground floor, plus a rear lobby and shower/toilet.

The listing reads as follows:

House. Early to mid C17. Timber frame, rendered. Tiled roof. Lobby entry, 3 cells, 4 bays. 2 storeys. Entrance to left of centre. Three 3 light casements on each floor, flush timber frames, leaded lights. Panelled pargetting. T shaped ridge stack behind entrance. Small hipped projection on right end with second entrance. Roughcast left gable end has a first floor 2 light casement, exposed purlins. Catslide roof over lean-to outshut to rear with 2 light casement on left end.

Not described in the listing is the rear elevation. Here there is a central two-storey projection at first floor level with a tiled hipped roof, containing a small gablet, with black weatherboarding to the walls. White painted rebated casement windows, two at ground floor level and two vertically arranged to the stairwell with a further double casement to the side for the first floor bathroom. To the rear of the kitchen is a triple 'Critall' metal casement window and a further doorway to the left and two small 'Critall' casement fanlights below the eaves above. The walls at this point are painted roughcast render.

The house is set within about 0.6 acre gardens gently sloping up to the west with a large parking area to the south bounded on two sides by outbuildings of

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION OLD HAMMERS MILL END RUSHDEN

timber framed construction with pitched roofs of corrugated iron and black weatherboarded walls.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

There is evidence that the house began as a three-cell two bay dwelling of early to mid seventeenth century origin. This structure can be readily seen internally where much of the original timber framing remains extant. It is surmised that this would have been an artisan's dwelling and has historically been associated with blacksmithing carried out in the larger of the remaining outbuildings well into the twentieth century.

At an unknown later date a third bay was added to the north. This may have originally been single storey as the first floor structure is clearly of later, possibly Victorian, construction. There are also two levels of eaves plate visible internally suggesting the roof may have been raised to its current position and this is the likely cause of the apparent spreading out of the walls at this point. Restraints to this movement are visible in the form of metal bars below the current kitchen ceiling.

A photograph of the rear elevation taken between 1900 and 1920 shows an extensive catslide roof over a single storey range running the full length of the house. This is also shown on a construction drawing dating from 1955. It is not known when this range was added but it is likely to have been at least Victorian but possibly earlier.

Until 1920 the property was part of the Julians Park estate when the estate was broken up and individual lots sold at auction. Old Hammers was described as a 'capital cottage and smithy with meadow'. Outbuildings included a smithy with two forges and shoeing place, cow house, stable and piggery. Early photographs show these buildings to be thatched and timber boarded of which two remain, the others being lost during the first half of the twentieth century.

The building was extensively altered at the rear in the mid 1950s by the removal of a section of the single store range and the addition of a stair turret and new staircase to the first floor. The original staircase, located between the dining room and middle first floor bay was removed and the floor infilled. These works are illustrated on a drawing prepared for Mr. G Chalk when the house was known as Rumah Lama (this name being transferred to the new bungalow to the west and the current name of Old Hammers being adopted). The kitchen was relocated from the south-west corner to the north bay and a larder and store created within this space.

Further alterations to the first floor were undertaken in the mid 1960s to create a first floor bathroom by widening the stair turret to its present form.

There is no evidence of any further changes to the property after this date and none to the front elevation since at least the early twentieth century.

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION OLD HAMMERS MILL END RUSHDEN

HERITAGE SIGNIFICANCE

This building is a good example of a typical mid seventeenth century dwelling in so far as the original structure remains intact within later, albeit historic (pre-listing) alterations. These later changes show the incremental development of the house into its current form in response to the needs of the occupiers.

There is no evidence of post 1900 changes to the front elevation, facing east onto the public highway, and this remains the most important feature externally.

The south elevation has similarly remained relatively unchanged apart from the insertion of a first floor window in the 1950s.

The north elevation has undergone significant change by the removal of part of the single storey range but the later north-bay is clearly intact.

The rear elevation has been extensively altered and the previously prominent roofscape, with a catslide running down from the ridge to a low ground floor eaves for the full length of the building, significantly modified. The resulting elevation does not contribute positively to the appearance of the listed building with its external drainage pipes and modern white painted casements that sit oddly within the west facing wall. Non-the-less these alterations can still be easily interpreted as later changes allowing a clear reading of the evolution of the building into its current form.

IMPACT OF PROPOSALS

The scope of the proposed extension and the rationale behind the design are set out in the Design and Access Statement.

The design of the extension forming this application avoids any further alteration to any part of the structure or fabric that pre-dates the 1960s alterations. No internal finishes earlier than the mid twentieth century will be affected but some minor changes to post 1960 finishes will be necessary.

There will be a more significant impact on the rear elevation affecting the appearance of the building and, on plan, turning it from a broadly linear footprint to a T form. The net increase to the ground floor area will be approximately 33%.

This change is considered positive, by extending the low-eaves catslide roofscape along the link this significant feature is preserved and enhanced and an awkward combination of pitched and flat roofs avoided. By orienting the main body of the extension parallel to the main ridge, but subordinate to it, the different ridge heights are accommodated.

HERITAGE STATEMENT FOR TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION OLD HAMMERS MILL END RUSHDEN

The use of traditional materials, for roof coverings, and details such as open eaves and cast iron rainwater goods and flush window casements are a sympathetic continuation of an existing rural tradition in keeping with the existing building and the wider settlement.

Overall this proposal continues the incremental evolution of the dwelling, adapting to the changing needs of the occupiers over time that can be clearly understood in the built form.

NOTES ON APPENDICES

A) Two photographs from 1900 to about 1921 showing the front/north, and rear/south elevations. The thatched building to the right of Old Hammers was demolished between 1921 and 1955. The catslide roof down to a low eaves is the dominant feature of the rear elevation that had been significantly altered by the mid-1960s. No material changes have been made to the front elevation.

B) Existing ground floor plan from the 1955 alterations showing the single storey range to the rear. The end store has been demolished but the building line to the back of the kitchen and scullery and larder remains. The staircase has been moved from the dining room into its current location.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION TO OLD HAMMERS MILL END RUSHDEN

INTRODUCTION

This statement has been prepared in support of a proposal to extend a house known as Old Hammers located at Mill End in the village of Rushden in North Hertfordshire for the benefit of Mr Christopher Curtis and Mrs Amy Curtis.

As referred to in The Heritage Statement, Old Hammers is a grade 2 listed building.

Chris and Amy are the latest occupants of Old Hammers, Amy being the fourth generation of the same family to live in the dwelling over the last century, and they desire to create a modestly larger house of four bedrooms with a modern kitchen. As with many professional occupations, much of their work will be home based and an enlarged house will provide the necessary additional space for this.

DESCRIPTION

The proposal comprises a two-storey rear extension to provide a new kitchen on the ground floor with an additional fourth bedroom to the first floor. The new bedroom will be accessible by its own dedicated staircase and it will have a small en-suite shower room at the same level.

The extension will be up to 6.5m high to the ridge and have a footprint of 5.9 x 5.96m overall. The ridge of the 45 degree pitch plain tiled roof will run parallel to the ridge of the main house roof and be linked by way of an extension to the existing first floor 'outshut' roof over a black weatherboarded wall on the north side. Walls will be rendered and painted to match the original with a projecting plinth at ground level. Windows will be purpose made oak flush casements with plain slim double glazing but will otherwise match the windows to the kitchen, dining room and bedroom of the existing house. A triple section bi-folding door unit will give access from the new kitchen onto a paved terrace leading into the garden.

PRE-APPLICATION CONSULTATION

Advice and comment was sought from the LPA in 2025 prior to this application based on a sketch proposal for a two-storey rear extension.

The pre-application response from the LPA was that given the positioning of the extension to the rear of the existing building, and that it would not have any visibility from the public realm together with the large garden and rural nature of Mill End, it would comply with Policy CGB1 and CGB4.

The Conservation Officer raised concerns regarding the depth of the rearward projection however it was acknowledged in the response that precedent for this was well established locally and should not therefore be an overriding constraint. Furthermore it will be shown, in The Heritage Statement, that the evolution of the building places the rearmost building line some 2.3m further

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION TO OLD HAMMERS MILL END RUSHDEN

out than interpreted by the Conservation Officer therefore limiting the projection of the extension to 5.9m.

The other main concerns expressed in the response were with regard to roof form and fenestration. These are addressed in the proposed design.

ROOF FORM

The roof form has been informed by the comments and suggestions contained within the LPA pre-application response.

It is recognised that the initial proposal for a stepped ridge and asymmetric gable represented an awkward form of development and this has been addressed by rotating the ridge to align with, but be subordinate to the ridge of the existing house. The existing 'outshut' is extended 1.1m on plan to join the new roof. Gables will now face north and south, with eaves to match the upper level of the existing.

The suggestion, in the LPA response, of increasing the height and width of the existing link, was thoroughly considered but because ancient buildings of Old Hammers' age can be fragile and very sensitive to changes in loads it was thought prudent to avoid this.

Because the current proposal affects only the most recent 1960's construction there will be no risk to the earlier historic fabric.

The south slope of the link will be extended down over the existing flat roof part of the rear hallway in order to simplify form and avoid an otherwise 'fussy' detail.

The dominant visual element of the existing house, when viewed from the rear, is the extensive roofscape extending down from the ridge to a low level above the windows to the sitting room. This has endured despite being interrupted by later works in the 1950s and 1960s that cannot be said to contribute positively to the character of the listed building. When viewed from the south-west the extended link roof will preserve and go some way to restore this feature whilst from the west, only viewed from the garden of the application site, the roof will present a simple slope.

FENESTRATION

The pre-application proposal replicated the general style of window seen to the existing stairwell but this was regarded as odd by the Conservation Officer and so his suggestion of a triple casement in the flank wall with simple single casements to the gable ends are proposed. Two small under-eaves casement windows are suggested to carry on the precedent of those above the kitchen.

The bi-fold doors are unavoidably contemporary in style however these sit within the south gable that is recognisably a later phase of development of the building and helps differentiate it from the earlier alterations.

DESIGN AND ACCESS STATEMENT FOR TWO STOREY REAR EXTENSION TO OLD HAMMERS MILL END RUSHDEN

Small conservation style rooflights are proposed to naturally light the stairwells and to compensate for loss of a window to the existing first floor bathroom.

STAIRCASE

The pre-application response from the Conservation Officer refers in passing to the proposal for an independent staircase to the first floor accommodation and recognises that this eats into the available floorspace.

As an alternative, in his conclusion, the Conservation officer makes the helpful suggestion of moving the stairs to have a 'link' landing. Whilst this does make efficient use of space it would entail significant alteration within the original stairwell and although this would only minimally affect pre -1960s construction it would present significant difficulties to occupants whilst works are carried out. Because of this a separate staircase to the fourth bedroom is proposed, something that is not unusual in buildings of this period.

KITCHEN

In a change from the pre-application submission the ground floor is to be a modern kitchen rather than a multi-use reception room as following detailed investigation the existing kitchen presented numerous difficulties for refurbishment but would lend itself to use as a utility room with home office area to the front.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The guiding principle of the design is to balance the desire for extra accommodation with the avoidance of harm to the listed building both in terms of historic fabric but also its character and setting. Due consideration has been given to the pre-application response from the LPA and where possible the suggestions contained therein have been incorporated.

The extension therefore uses traditional materials and finishes, plain handmade clay tiles and painted render whilst remaining subordinate to the original dwelling. This continues the theme of periodic enlargement and development of the property to meet the temporal needs of the occupiers. The extension is of sympathetic yet definably different proportions to the historic one and of a simpler design hence the overall historic development of the house will still be apparent.

Viewed from the north and south, the extension takes the form of a subordinate cross wing and represents a pragmatic means of creating extra accommodation to meet modern requirements.

In summary this proposal represents a reasonable and modest addition continuing the tradition of gradual development that marks the evolution of the building from its mid seventeenth century origins to the present day.