
MEMORANDUM

From:	Built Heritage Officer		
Service	Green Infrastructure	App No:	260082
Address:	18 Primrose Lane, Winnersh, Wokingham, RG41 5UR		
Proposal:	Householder application for the proposed erection of single storey side extensions and a part single part two storey rear extension.		
Heritage Assets:	18 Primrose Lane – Grade II since 1984		
Site Visit Made:	Yes		

Summary Of Recommendations

Objection

Comments On Proposal

The application proposes the extension and alteration to 18 Primrose Lane, a Grade II listed building. The proposals include single storey extensions, including an attached garage and home office, two storey extensions, wrap around verandah and internal alteration.

18 Primrose Lane (Meadow Cottage) is a late 16th century box timber framed building with later turn of the (20th) century extensions and alterations. Once a cottage which stood in isolation, the building is now surrounded by modern development which has sought to significantly compromise the historic setting. Notwithstanding this, the building can still be appreciated as a relatively unaltered historic building which retains a high degree of charm and authenticity.

The primarily element is of the late 16th century, box-framed with some alteration and a later stack and over-sized porch to the front. In the main, the original infill panels – which would have been wattle and daub – have been replaced with brick nogging, which has subsequently been painted with a textured masonry paint. Some of the mortar appears to be cementitious and parts of the frame display signs of decay. Repair and restoration works have been enacted to the west gable end (expanded on below), with the south front, east flank retaining the unsympathetic alteration. The fenestration appears to be consistent throughout the building (save for the top floor – noted later) and seems to be contemporaneous with the late 19th / early 20th century alterations. To the rear, a perpendicular gable end addition was added, likely early 20th century judging from the chimney's

brickwork, an additional element was added to the north-east corner allowing for a U-shape plan form.

It is proposed to add additional form to the rear of the Edwardian gabled element, as to further project into the rear garden. This would result in the end gable being absorbed and architectural details, as to include the four-light casements (and tiled pent hoods) being removed. Further to this, it is proposed to remove the internal walling with new partitioning created. It is also proposed to remove some of the historic timber frame and walling as to allow for access to the bedroom. This two-storey element's elevation treatment would be of brick and tile hanging, under a plain tile roof – such materiality may seek to add further and diverse appearance to the building – would the brick be painted? In Stretcher bond as shown? Would the vertically hung tiles differ in hue to the roof? (such details would typically be conditioned; however, the understanding of the appearance goes to the heart of assessment). Furthermore, due to the large contemporary bi-folding doors and 'plainness' for lack of better term, this element does not fully respond to the quality of the host. It is neither one thing nor the other. There is no refinement or charm of the Arts & Crafts (domestic revival) style which it would replace. The proposed metal flue for the stove appears as an afterthought, and peculiar in appearance (this could have easily been integrated internally or with an actual chimney applied externally). In addition, it doesn't appear the cross-sectional elevation drawings (as to view east/west elevations from within the de facto courtyard have been submitted?

Turning the central element, it is proposed for a two-storey extension, as to effectively match the depth of the extant Edwardian element to the centre of the rear elevation. This proposed element would seek to consume the catslide roof, three-light dormer, tile-hung dormer and flat roofed single-storey element. The architectural form and appearance would be that of a timber frame, as to reflect the host, albeit in slightly more contemporary manner due to the fenestration form and proportion. This proposed element would also result in the reduction of the extant three-light dormer to the attic. Whilst this dormer has effectively been rebuilt with a replacement window (noted later), the form and appearance are still very much of the early 20th century, with a strong horizontal character. Conversely, the proposed reduction results in a single light window, which is most odd in appearance.

In terms of the proposed single-storey elements, whilst in general terms, such elements would be acceptable, the proposed linking results in a rabbling planform. It is noted there is a home office/log cabin in the approximate position to the side of the building. This structure does not benefit from planning permission (for being within a curtilage of a listed building it requires) and thus cannot be used as a precedent for built form in this area.

The proposals would result in a substantive loss of historic fabric, including numerous historic architectural features. The proposed cutting of the 16th century timber frame – as to allow to the newly created dressing room - is highly inappropriate and it is extremely surprising this has been proposed. This framing (along with associated infill fabric, although the age of this infill panelling is uncertain – given the external panels has been replaced with brick nogging, and

this area has been internalised, is it the original wattle and daub, or historic lath and plaster? – this is not mentioned in the assessment) is well preserved and forms part of one of the primary elements of the building's significance. Whilst the annotation implies only the rail would be removed in this area, given the low height of the top plate, would this also need to be cut? Notwithstanding the inappropriate loss of fabric here, the requirement to duck down to save injury when using this doorway further reinforces the unsuitable nature of the proposal.

Such as substantial loss has not been justified in a clear and convenient manner. Whilst it is recognised elements of the building are not in the best of condition, this does not equate to the allowance for their removal. For example, the chimney stack, whilst it is clearly in poor condition and not appropriately supported at the ground level, the level of information on this is deficient. Why does it not have a ground part of the stack? Was it built like this? (unlikely, but not impossible), if it was removed, why, what is the significance? It would be typically expected for a structural assessment to accompany (and thus justify) why a structure of this type cannot be retained as extant – this does not, however, negate the ability to re-construct it. The NPPF specifically allows for the owners of historic buildings not to be 'rewarded' for the poor condition of the building – as para. 209 states: *"Where there is evidence of deliberate neglect of, or damage to, a heritage asset, the deteriorated state of the heritage asset should not be taken into account in any decision."* For clarity, lack of appropriate maintenance in this regard is considered deliberate neglect.

Unauthorised Works:

It has become clear a number of unauthorised works, which require listed building consent, and/or planning permission, have taken place at the property. The applicant is reminded that it is an Offence under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to enact, or cause to enact, works which affect the special interest of a listed building with consent in place.

Works requiring listed building consent (LBC):

Windows

The 2no. windows, one being a 3-light casement sited within a dormer, and one being a single casement to the east gable, both rectangular leaded lights to the top floor of the building have been replaced with new double-glazed units. From photographic records, it appears the two windows were contemporary in appearance to the other windows in the property, which date from the turn of the 20th century. At the current time it is uncertain why the windows have been replaced with the new units, whilst similar in style, failing to accurately reproduce the original single-pane glazing of the historic windows.

Roof and structure

The roof structure and associated joinery (such as the aforementioned dormer) have been altered. It is understood this was enacted during the re-covering of the

roof. A new membrane has also been installed, and at the current time it is uncertain as to whether this is of a breathable or non-breathable type. It was mentioned on site the timbers (that is, as to include the roof rafters, but not exclude other framing elements) were damaged by beetle infestation. It appears the timber structure has been re-constructed partly using historic timbers and partly with new, modern softwood.

Removal of historic lath and plaster

Directly related to the above, the lath and plaster wall covering in the attic (3rd floor) area has been removed. From photographic records, the walling and ceilings were covered with plaster and finished with a woodchip style wallpaper (or similar). This fabric has been removed; it is presumed to facilitate the above noted works to the roof structure.

Works to west end gable wall

The 16th century element of the building is that of box-framing with infill panels. Originally the infill panels would have been wattle and daub, or possibly originally, or replaced subsequently with, lath and plaster, then later, the panels have been replaced with brick nogging. Whilst photographic records are unclear as to the exact prior material of the infill panels on the west flank, it would be reasonable to presume they were as to match those to the south and east (front and opposite side). This fabric has been removed and replaced with lime plaster panels with a light ochre limewash – it is, however, uncertain as to the nature of the substrate material. Further to this, elements of the timber frame have been removed with new material spliced in. Whilst these works appear to be well intentioned, and it is clearly evident the brick infill/cementitious parts are harmful both physically and functionally but also aesthetically, such works constitute a change – an alteration which requires listed building consent. If enacted inappropriately such works may result in further harm to the listed building.

Works require planning permission:

Home office/log cabin

As noted above, a home office/log cabin has been erected to the west of the building, this, by virtue of being within a curtilage of a listed building, and therefore not being permitted development, required planning permission. A domestic shed was also noted, which for the same reasoning, required planning permission. (GPDO Schedule 2, Part 1, Class E).

Fencing and gates

Fencing and gates require planning permission by virtue of being within the curtilage or enclosing the curtilage of a listed building (GPDO Schedule 2, Part 2, Class A).

The above list is not exhaustive and additional unauthorised works may arise. Given the adverse impact of some of the works, it would not be inappropriate for enforcement action to result, with the very least the applicant invited to submit for retention/further alteration of the works.

Summary

In conclusion, the proposed alterations to 18 Primrose Lane would result in less-than-substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. This harm would arise through the loss of historic fabric, the erosion to the historic plan form and thus understanding and legality of the historic structure.

Where harm is identified, para 215 of the NPPF requires that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits (including heritage benefits) of the proposal, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use. Some economic benefits would be brought about through the construction phase and the general investment into the property. However, the scale of those benefits is short-term and limited by the extent and nature of the proposal. The primary outcomes of the proposed works, namely the increase to and re-order the living accommodation, would be private benefits to the applicant that do not provide clear and convincing justification as required under para. 213 of the NPPF (Dec 24). It is not considered the scheme as proposed in its entirety is fundamentally necessary to secure the optimum viable use of the building, which already provides generous levels of accommodation. Moreover, no substantive evidence has been presented which verifies that the property would not be useable or viable as a dwelling now or in the future, or that its conservation as a designated heritage asset would be at risk, if the application's proposals were permitted, as submitted, were not implemented. No 'heritage' benefits, which can be interpreted as public benefits, have been put forward as part of the application. Such works as the removal of the inappropriate infill panels and the repair works to the timber frame may constitute such benefits, however these would not necessarily be exclusive the proposed extension and alteration scheme.

Furthermore, the application provides an insufficient level of information in a number of key areas. As noted above, not all elevation and section drawings have been submitted, given the impact to the fabric, a structural survey would be expected as to qualify areas of current or consequential deficiency.

Under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the LPA has a statutory duty to pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Through the loss of historic fabric and architectural features, erosion to the plan form, unsympathetic architectural form and detailing, the proposed alterations would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building (S16 and S66, P(LB&CA)A 90).

Given the identified harm, the proposed development would conflict with Policy CP3 of the Wokingham Borough Council Core Strategy and Policy TB24 of the Managing Development Delivery local plan.

As such, an objection is raised to the application from a heritage perspective. This objection is based upon the loss of historic fabric, erosion of the historic plan form, unsympathetic design and insufficient information submitted.

Conditions			
N/A			
Date:	20/02/2026	Signed:	Roderick McDonald Built Heritage Officer