
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 September 2016

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 10 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/V2004/Y/16/3145763

20 Silver Street, Kingston Upon Hull HU1 1JG

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Royal Bank of Scotland against the decision of Kingston-Upon-Hull City Council.
 - The application Ref 15/00855/LBC, dated 14 July 2015, was refused by notice dated 7 September 2015.
 - The works are the removal of a World War I bronze memorial plaque for the grade II* (star) listed No.19 Silver Street, Hull, HU1 3SS.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. At the time of my site visit the works to remove the memorial plaque had taken place; the application form notes that this occurred on 1 April 2013.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is whether the works preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II* listed building.

Reasons

4. 20 Silver Street is a Grade II* listed late 19th century former bank, constructed in portland stone in a Baroque Revival style. The ornate and detailed main elevations have moulded plinths with banded and pulvinated rustication to the ground floor and segmental hoods on ornate scroll brackets to first floor windows. Although the bank has been converted into a public house, the interior, noted in the listing, retains a well preserved former banking hall with pilasters and columns supporting an ornate plaster ceiling with shallow dome.
5. The significance of the building derives from its high quality architecture and materials, together with its presence in the street scene. Internally the retention of the banking hall and shallow dome clearly show the history of the building and allow it to be read as a former bank, despite its use having changed.
6. Policy ENV6 of the Joint Structure Plan¹ (JSP) states that the character of listed buildings should be protected. Policy BE27 of the City Plan² states that altering

¹ Joint Structure Plan for Kingston Upon Hull and the East Riding Of Yorkshire, 2005.

a listed building will not be allowed if it adversely affects, or is not in keeping with, its special architectural or historic interest. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses.

7. The memorial plaque pays tribute to those staff of the National Provincial and Union Bank of England, detailed in evidence as a predecessor of the NatWest bank, who served in World War I. The memorial was formerly in place in the lobby area of 20 Silver Street. The plaque was relocated to an existing branch of NatWest at No 34 King Edward Street, where it was placed on the wall in the main core of this bank. The appellant states that this was carried out to ensure that all memorials in the bank's ownership³ were placed on public display in time for the 100th anniversary of the War.
8. The plaque pays tribute to the staff of the bank who served in World War I, including those who worked within 20 Silver Street. As such the plaque is indelibly associated with the building itself, providing the memorial with specific historical interest and value, and contributing to the special interest of the Grade II* listed building. The appellant notes that the plaque would have been an addition to the building following the Great War and would thus not be an original fixture. However, this is part of its interest; it helps to tell the story of the bank and those who worked within it. Moreover the plaque would have been in place at the time of the listing of the building in 1990. The severance of the memorial from its original location diminishes the interest of the plaque and the significance of the listed building. The appellant also notes that the plaque is not specifically referred to in the listing; however, the listing notes the well preserved interior of the building. The memorial, in its original position, would contribute towards this interior.
9. The appellant is of the view that as many historic buildings were built to house banking functions in cities such as Hull, it does not in itself constitute a special interest. However, the listing of the property at Grade II* places it in the top 8% of listed buildings in the country, demonstrating that it is a particularly important example of a bank, and of more than special interest at national level.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes it clear that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a listed building, great weight should be given to its conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of the heritage asset, and as they are irreplaceable, any harm should require clear and convincing justification. For the reasons given above I consider the works have resulted in harm being caused to the significance of this listed building. The appellant notes that the Council's report does not state the level of harm that the movement of the plaque has caused. However, and particularly as the works only affect a small part of the building, I am satisfied that the degree of harm caused is less than substantial. I also note in this respect that the Council's Principal Conservation Officer was of the same view.
11. In such situations the harm should be weighed against the public benefits. The appellant notes that the memorial is well looked after and on public display,

² Hull City Plan, 2000.

³ Stated as over numbering over 300 in the evidence

and that the removal of the plaque has enabled the bank to maintain and restore it. I can also appreciate the value of the memorial to the bank and its current staff, in terms of its reference to the sacrifices made by former employees of the bank. The appellant clearly has good intentions towards the memorial.

12. However, the plaque in its position within 20 Silver Street would also be viewable by the public who use the public house. The plaque contributes to the understanding of the building and would help the public to understand the history and significance of the bank. The appellant raises concern over the risk of future damage and poor maintenance of the memorial if returned to 20 Silver Street. However, in situ as part of the listed building the plaque would be a statutory listed fixture and would thus be protected under the Act. I do not consider therefore that any public benefits have been identified that are sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the heritage asset that I have identified.

Conservation Area

13. As the site lies within a conservation area, I am required to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with Section 72(1) of the Act. However, in this case, as the works are confined to the interior of the building, I am satisfied that the character and appearance of the Old Town Conservation Area are preserved.

Conclusions

14. Whilst I have found that the works preserves the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, this does not outweigh the harm that has been caused to the significance of the Grade II* listed building by the removal of the plaque. Such harm is not outweighed by public benefits. The works are also contrary to policy ENV6 of the JSP and policy BE27 of the City Plan. In this respect I note that the appellant considers that they should be afforded limited weight due to their age and limited consistency with the Framework. Whilst I accept that the policies are not entirely consistent with the Framework, for the reasons given above the removal of the memorial is also contrary to the Framework.
15. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR