
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 November 2016

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/V0728/Y/16/3155712

18 Stone Row, Skinningrove, Redcar and Cleveland TS13 4BE

- 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 Mr T Evans against the decision of Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council.
 - The application Ref R/2016/0144/LB, dated 3 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2016.
 - The works proposed are the replacement of existing timber windows and doors with UPVC windows and doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building and whether they would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Skinningrove Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. 18 Stone Row is Grade II listed along with its conjoined semi-detached property, No 19 Stone Row. The cottages are constructed in dressed sandstone and have renewed clay pantile roofs. Both properties are 2 storeys high and have 4 windows on their façades, with prominent painted lintels over ground floor windows and doors, with matching but smaller sills to the windows on both floors. The pair of cottages are sited at an angle to the adjacent linear row of cottages on Stone Row, facing onto the wide open space of the Square at the heart of the village. The cottages both fall within the Skinningrove conservation area (SCA).
 4. Both cottages maintain timber windows and doors although the designs differ between the properties. No 18 has 12 pane sash windows at both floors, slightly larger at ground floor, and a fairly modern timber door, whilst No 19 has top hung casement windows. All windows and doors are brown, in contrast to the white windows in surrounding properties and to the colour and prominence of the lintels and sills.
 5. The prominence of the buildings in the street scene in the heart of the historical centre of the village and their vernacular nature are all important parts of the
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- buildings' special interest and significance. The simplicity of their form adds to this significance.
6. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses. Section 72(1) of the same act states that special attention must be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area
 7. Policy CS25 of the Core Strategy¹ states that development proposals will be expected to contribute positively to the character of the built and historic environment of the Borough, with particular protection given to the character and special features of conservation areas and listed buildings. Policies DP9 and DP10 of the DP DPD² together state that development within a conservation area (CA) will only be permitted where it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the CA, and that development involving the alteration of a listed building will only be permitted if it preserves or enhances its special character as a listed building.
 8. The proposal seeks to replace the existing timber windows and doors in the property with PVC-U ones. The proposed windows are from the 'REHAU Heritage' range of sliding sash windows of a style to match the existing windows, in 'rosewood' colour. The front door is proposed to have a half glazed arch top window with stained glass inset. The rear door would be a door of a design to match the existing stable door style.
 9. Detailed drawings are submitted showing the profile of the new proposed windows to indicate the slimness of the proposed sashes. However, I have no precise details on the width of the existing windows, and without such details it is difficult to compare the two. I note in this respect the comments of the appellant that the specification of the proposed windows replicates almost exactly the profile of the existing windows, and that the Council conservation officer states that the form and function of the proposed windows are generally appropriate.
 10. However, I have concerns over the proposed material of the new doors and windows. Plastic based windows have a distinctly different appearance and patina to timber windows. The windows and doors would appear different to traditional windows and would weather in different ways. The windows and doors, particularly on the façade of the building, are located in a prominent position and would compare unfavourably with the existing timber windows on No 19, despite the age of these windows.
 11. The appellant notes the presence of numerous examples nearby of PVC-U windows, including on the adjacent row of cottages on Stone Row. I noted these examples on my site visit, and saw that the majority of properties in the SCA had PVC-U windows. However, it appeared to me that the windows in the listed buildings in the SCA, namely the appeal site, Nos 9-12 Stone Row around the corner, and the majority of those visible in 'Timms Coffee House' (now Moonfleet Guest House and Bar) retained timber windows. Whilst I note the appellant's comments regarding the listing of the property and the accuracy of the listing, the property is one of only a few buildings to have been listed in the

¹ Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework Core Strategy DPD, July 2007

² Redcar & Cleveland Local Development Framework Development Policies DPD, July 2007

village due to its special interest. In my view the current windows of the property contribute to such special architectural interest, and harm would be caused to this interest by the proposal.

12. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes it clear that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of designated heritage assets, including listed buildings and conservation areas, great weight should be given to their conservation. For the reasons given above I consider that the proposal would result in harm being caused to the significance of this listed building, and that in doing so, would fail also to preserve the historic character and appearance of the SCA to which the property makes an important contribution. However, I am satisfied that the degree of harm caused would be less than substantial.
13. In such situations the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including securing the asset's optimum use. These can be summarised as the increased energy saving potential of new windows, the increased cost of replacement timber windows at around 33% more than the proposed windows, the personal circumstances of the appellant making maintenance more difficult, and the potential benefits of a PVC-U door in the event of further flooding in the village.
14. Whilst I can appreciate that new windows and doors could save energy over the existing older fittings, I have no evidence over whether PVC-U windows would necessarily save more energy than new timber windows would. I also have no evidence that a modern timber door could not be just as effective against the ingress of flood water as a plastic based one. I am sympathetic to the increased costs of the timber windows as evidenced over the PVC-U ones, and the appellant's personal circumstances. However, whilst I attribute some weight to such matters, the Framework states that the significance of heritage assets can be lost through alteration of the asset and as such assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification. I do not consider in this case that the public benefits put forward are sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm that would be caused by the proposal.

Other Matters

15. I note the evidence regarding the investment the appellants have put into the property since they moved into the building, and that it was listed after they moved in. I can appreciate that the appellants have the best intentions for their home. However, this does not outweigh the harm that I have found the proposal would cause to the listed building and the SCA.
16. I note the support of the Town Council and Ward Councillor for the proposal. The appellant also states that the decision to refuse the consent was made by only 1 vote on the planning committee, and that the decision was thus "marginal". However, for the reasons given above I have considered that the proposed works would cause harm to both the host building and the SCA.
17. Details are submitted of other examples where the proposed window types have been found acceptable. However, from the information provided to me, only one of the four examples appears to relate to a listed building, and in that case timber windows were retained on the façade of the building. Furthermore, each case must be dealt with on its own merits.

18. The appellant refers to paragraph 135 of the Framework. This paragraph however refers only to non-designated heritage assets. I have applied paragraphs 132-134 in my reasoning above, which applies to designated heritage assets.

Conclusion

19. I therefore conclude that the proposed works would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building; neither would they preserve nor enhance the character or appearance of the Skinningrove Conservation Area. The proposals would be contrary to the Framework and to Policies CS25 of the Core Strategy and DP9 and DP10 of the DP DPD. I do not consider that sufficient public benefits exist to outweigh such harm.
20. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR