
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 January 2017

by Siân Worden BA MCD DipLH MRTPI

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

Decision date: 14 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/Y/16/3161563
24 Higher Road, Longridge, PR3 3SX

- 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 Dominic Wiek against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2016/0750, dated 26 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2016.
 - The works are the removal of paint from stone door and window lintels, repainting window frames and door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the removal of paint from stone door and window lintels, repainting window frames and door at 24 Higher Road, Longridge, PR3 3SX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 3/2016/0750, dated 26 June 2016.

Procedural matter

2. By the time of my site visit the works had been carried out.

Main Issue

3. I consider that the main issue in this case is whether the works have preserved the listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a terraced cottage in a long row of similar dwellings; nos. 6 to 44 are listed together at Grade II. The listing description notes that they are constructed from squared, coursed sandstone with slate roofs and brick stacks; the windows have plain¹ reveals and projecting stone sills, and the doorways have plain stone surrounds. It adds that the row was built by the Longridge Building Society, which was one of the earliest terminating building societies in the country. A blue plaque installed by Longridge Heritage Committee explains that the terrace is thought to be the oldest surviving example of properties built by a building society in the world. The significance of the appeal dwelling lies mainly in its social history, therefore, as well as its place as a component of the listed row.

¹ The Council states that 'plain' in this instance does not mean 'unpainted' and I agree with that position.

5. The stone of the front wall has been cleaned previously. It has a somewhat patchy appearance with two vertical strips of discolouration around the drainpipe and level with the chimney stack. The door surround and window sills and lintels have also now been cleaned of their dark paint, such works being the subject of this appeal. There are some signs of damage, particularly around the windows where gouges can be seen. These are not deep, however, and not especially noticeable. It is possible that they have been in place for some time but were disguised by the previous paint. I cannot be certain, therefore, that any historic fabric has been lost or damaged. The window frames and door, which are modern, are painted light green and are similar in tone to the stone. Whilst not a traditional colour it is not obtrusive or significantly uncharacteristic.
6. The cottages in the listed row are not uniform in appearance. Some have been cleaned. Others have not but have been repointed, the light mortar contrasting strongly with the dark stone. There are painted lintels and door surrounds, both light and dark, as well as others with no paint similar to the appeal dwelling. Window frames and doors are also treated with a number of different finishes and colours. The works to the doors and windows at No. 24 have not, therefore, made the appeal property look conspicuous or incongruous in the row. It still has the appearance of a worker's cottage in a long terrace of similar dwellings. Neither its significance nor that of the row as a whole has been thus been harmed.
7. I am conscious of the statutory requirement to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its features and, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, to give great weight to an asset's conservation². All things considered it is my opinion that the appeal works have not been harmful and thus the listed building and its features of special architectural or historic interest are preserved. Since the terrace is listed as a whole it does not seem to me that the appeal property is within the setting of other cottages in the row. If it was considered so, however, the lack of harm would preserve those settings and also the character and appearance of the Longridge Conservation Area.
8. The Council has provided several extracts in respect of the cleaning of heritage assets, all urging caution. I can appreciate its concern, particularly with regard to the removal of the 'patina of age'. To my mind, however, it has been the cleaning of the stone walling which has had the greatest effect but those works are not the subject of this appeal. Furthermore, and as explained above, other cottages in the row have been cleaned such as the appeal property does not stand out in the row. I have taken all the matters raised into consideration but not found any sufficient to refuse the appeal.
9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Síân Worden

Inspector

² NPPF paragraph 132