
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2017

by Elaine Benson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2810/Y/16/3160761

Old Forge, Chapel Lane, Charwelton, Northamptonshire, NN11 3YU

- 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 Miss Janet Stanley against the decision of Daventry District Council.
 - The application Ref DA/2016/0706, dated 22 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2016.
 - The works proposed are described as the replacement of all current timber frame windows, restoring to 'village standard' single horizontal glazing bar. Replacement with like-for-like timber frames and window fittings. To be glazed with 12 mm slim heritage double glazed unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the statutory duty to consider the effect of the proposed works on the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

3. The Old Forge is a Grade II listed cottage of 2 storeys with an attic dating from 1770. It stands in the village of Charwelton close to the A361 road. It comprises coursed ironstone rubble with artificial stone slate roof and brick end stacks. It has a 2-window range and contains 20th century casement windows. Windows on the ground floor have timber lintels. The entrance to the cottage is at the rear of the property. The cottage was extended over 2 storeys in the early 1990's. Part of Old Forge's significance is as a traditional stone cottage close to the road in a village setting.
 4. Windows are often among the most prominent features of a listed building and can be indicators of when the building was built and intrinsic to its character and appearance. The design, materials and details of construction of the original windows and their method of opening are all important to the significance of the heritage asset and its special interest. In my view this includes the single glazing at the appeal cottage.
 5. The window openings are of different shapes and sizes and over time the original windows have been replaced. They now comprise single glazed timber
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casement windows of varying styles and ages. There is no dispute that the majority of the windows in the cottage leak. Some are rotted beyond repair or warped so that they can no longer be opened. There are evident problems with condensation as I observed at my site visit and I acknowledge the appellant's concerns that this could affect the preservation of the building. This matter is addressed further below.

6. It is proposed to replace all of the windows with a simple, single horizontal glazing bar design which is believed to replicate the original windows. The proposed glazing pattern is seen in other historic and listed properties in the local Fawsley Estate area. Any replacement windows in a listed building should be sympathetic to its historic character and appearance and in this case the introduction of a consistent and historic window design would address some of the harm done to the cottage during the past alteration works. I agree with the Council that the proposed form and design of the replacement window frames would respect the architectural language of the building's fenestration and would enhance the character and appearance of the listed building as a whole. However, it is proposed to install double glazed units in the new timber windows and this is the crux of the appeal.
7. The appellant intends to use the 'latest window technology' by using 12 mm slim-line 'heritage' double glazed windows. They would be thinner than standard double glazing but significantly thicker than a single pane of glass. The reflective characteristics of the windows would clearly identify them as double glazed units and not historically accurate replacements, whatever the level of light transmission through them. The double glazing would be apparent from within the building and externally. In my judgement the construction, detailing, proportion and design of the proposed double glazed windows would not conserve the architectural character and history of the building.
8. I note the appellant's comments that there are many different types of window and glazing in local buildings, including some which are listed. Furthermore, the appellant perceives that the Council applies a blanket objection to double glazed windows in listed buildings, noting that neighbouring authorities have approved the use of slim-line double glazing. I have limited information about the background to these cases, including the age and type of the buildings. However the Council confirmed that it does not have a formal policy to this effect, but determines each case on its own merits. Moreover, I am required to determine the effect of the proposed double glazed windows on the architectural integrity and significance of the Old Forge and have dealt with this appeal on its own merits, having regard to the age, character, construction and context of the cottage, alongside all other site specific circumstances.
9. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance. Paragraph 132 advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification.
10. I have concluded that the proposed double glazed units would harm the architectural integrity and significance of the Grade II listed building. This would amount to less than substantial harm. Paragraph 134 of the Framework

advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.

11. The existing windows are in poor condition and the appellant wishes to improve the energy efficiency and thermal properties of the cottage and improve its overall environmental sustainability. The appellant also states that noise and vibration from traffic on the A361 causes damage to plasterwork and a level of night time noise disturbance although there is no technical evidence to support these assertions. The appellant has carried out restoration and remedial work, including addressing damage to beams, ceilings and brickwork and damp. There is no dispute that the combination of cold weather and condensation is likely to have caused the identified damage to the building. Shutters were installed to address heating levels, condensation and noise, but the appellant reports that they have had limited success. An external door has been replaced and I note the appellant's comment that the level of condensation on its window has not altered.
12. Remedying these concerns could be considered to be public benefits arising from the proposed works as they may help prevent further damage to the fabric of the listed cottage. While I have sympathy with the appellant in respect of the matters set out above, these factors and the public benefits, even when taken together, do not outweigh the harm that would be caused by the installation of double glazed units to the significance of the listed cottage.
13. In coming to this conclusion I have been mindful of the fact that other options are available which could improve the thermal performance of the cottage, noise disturbance and reduce condensation, but they have not been fully explored. The Council points to examples given in Historic England's guidance and in particular advises of the benefits of draught proofing or installing a secondary glazed window system on the internal side of the windows.
14. I note that the appellant received verbal support for the appeal proposals from members of the local community, although no representations were recorded by the Council. I have considered all of the information put forward and have weighed the benefits of the proposed works against the identified harm to the significance of the listed cottage. The balance weighs clearly in favour of dismissing the appeal. The installation of the proposed double glazed units would be contrary to saved Daventry District Local Plan Policies GN2 (e), EN42 (b) and Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (CS) which are of relevance to this appeal proposal. In summary they require that development should conserve designated heritage assets, should be of high quality, should not adversely affect a listed building and should reinforce local distinctiveness. These policies are consistent with the Framework. It follows from these conflicts that the proposal is not sustainable development supported by CS Policy SA and the Framework.

Conclusion

15. The proposed works, in respect of the double glazed units, would harm the special architectural and historic interest and significance of the listed cottage. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Elaine Benson
INSPECTOR