
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 20 March 2017

by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12th April 2017

Appeal A: APP/P2935/W/16/3164396

West Cottage, Shepherds Dene, Riding Mill, NE44 6AF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Gibbard against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02621/FUL, dated 26 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is extension to kitchen.
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Appeal B: APP/P2935/Y/16/3164395

West Cottage, Shepherds Dene, Riding Mill, NE44 6AF

- 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 Gibbard against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02622/LBC, dated 26 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 September 2016.
 - The works proposed are extension to kitchen.
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Decision

1. Appeal A: The appeal is dismissed.
2. Appeal B: The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

3. The Council advises that the site lies within the designated Green Belt. The floorspace of the proposed extension is stated as being 10.5 sq m and given the existing total floorspace of 245 sq m, the Council consider that it would be a limited addition that would not have a material impact on the openness of the Green Belt. From all I have seen and read, I have no reason to disagree.

Main Issue

4. West Cottage was built in 1907 and is a Grade II listed building.
5. The main issue in this case is, therefore, the effect of the proposal on the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building.

Reasons

6. The starting point for the consideration of the proposals is Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the
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Act) which require that the decision maker has special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.

7. The cottage is one of a group of buildings situated on the Shepherds Dene estate. Its significance as a listed building lies in its historic association with Shepherds Dene, a substantial Grade II listed building, and other properties on the estate as well as in its architectural detailing. The dwelling is constructed in stone and is characterised by its asymmetrical roof, formal south facing front elevation with a veranda facing Shepherds Dene and its detailing which includes windows with stone mullions, plain cills and lintels and alternate block jambs. The cottage was built as a single dwelling but was, for a time, used as two separate dwellings and was altered accordingly. More recently there have been alterations at the rear including the provision of additional accommodation at first floor level.
8. The proposal seeks to extend the building on the western side by way of a single storey extension to provide a dining/breakfast room. To facilitate access to the extension, the existing window and masonry below it would be removed although the stone window surrounds would be retained. The extension would have a partly hipped, partly flat roof incorporating a roof light, and timber glazed screens of casement windows to the southern and western elevations with a predominantly solid wall on the north side.
9. The building, which is of an Arts and Crafts style, has a regular and relatively compact floor plan and the list description notes that the four ground floor and four first floor rooms have a fairly symmetrical layout. The western and eastern elevations are similar in terms of their form and appearance, with the exception of an additional window on the east elevation, but in themselves are asymmetrical. At the front, at first floor level, the windows are regularly set out but the bay window, veranda and position of the entrance door at the ground floor, and the change in land levels, mean that the front elevation is not symmetrical. As such it does not seem to me that symmetry is a significant component of the special interest of the building.
10. The proposed extension has been carefully designed to reflect the height and detailing of the bay window. It would be a subservient addition to the building that would be set well back from the principal front elevation. Whilst any addition to the building would affect the symmetry of the plan form, the opening between the kitchen and the new room would be limited in terms of its width enabling the original plan form to remain legible.
11. However, the proposal would result in the loss of historic fabric including the loss of the stone mullioned window which in itself makes a positive contribution to the special architectural and historic interest of the building. Whilst I accept that the windows on West Cottage are less detailed than those on Shepherds Dene, they are nevertheless a characteristic feature of this particular building. I have taken into consideration the appellant's suggestion that the mullioned window could be incorporated into the proposal and secured by way of a condition. However, I do not have any detailed plans before me to demonstrate how such an amendment might be successfully accommodated in the scheme. Moreover, I must determine the proposal on the basis of the plans before me.

12. Accordingly the loss of the window would harm the significance of the listed building and thus would be contrary to Policy BE1 of the Tynedale Core Strategy 2007 and Policies H20 and BE22 of the Tynedale Local Plan which in various ways seek to preserve heritage assets. I have also had regard to the Policy 33 of the emerging Northumberland County Council Core Strategy although as the document is not yet adopted it carries limited weight at present.
13. The proposal will affect only part of the listed building and accordingly would result in less than substantial, rather than substantial, harm to its significance. Less than substantial harm does not however mean less than substantial objection. The approach in the National Planning Policy Framework is that in such cases this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including securing its optimum viable use.
14. The appellant advises that there would be some environmental gains through heat efficiencies and lower energy use, in other words through the provision of a more sustainable building. However, there is no specific evidence before me on the matter and given the scale of the development it seems to me that any such benefit is likely to be limited. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide enhanced accommodation particularly in terms of circulation in the kitchen/dining area, although there is no suggestion that the building is currently unviable as a dwelling. Notwithstanding this, given the weighty requirement as set out in the Act and the advice in the Framework that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, any limited benefits would not outweigh the harm I have identified.
15. For these reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, the appeals are therefore dismissed.

Susan Ashworth

INSPECTOR