
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 December 2016

by J E Tempest BA(Hons) MA PGDip PGCertHE MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 3 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/Y/16/3159969

Hambrook Grove Hotel, Bristol Road, Hambrook, Bristol BS16 1RY

- 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 M Iqbal against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref PT16/1290/LB, dated 17 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 June 2016.
 - The works proposed are described as "Retrospective application for the replacement of the existing single storey rear and side extensions".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issues

2. An extension has been built on the site following the removal of an earlier extension and shed. The submitted drawings annotated as 'existing' elevations and floorplans do not reflect what is on site now but show what was on the site before the existing extension was built. What has been built differs from the 'proposed' elevation drawings, primarily in relation to the roof of the extension. It is clear that the appellant seeks consent for what is shown on the 'proposed' drawings and my decision is made on this basis. Accordingly I refer to the scheme as a proposal, notwithstanding the description of the works in the heading above.
3. The Council's evidence makes clear that the works which have been carried out are the subject of a listed building enforcement notice. However, the appeal before me does not arise from the enforcement notice and the enforcement notice is not a determining factor in my appeal.
4. Accordingly, the **main issues** in this appeal are:
 - Whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building (listed as Hambrook Grove Hotel) or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest in possesses.
 - Whether the proposed works would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hambrook Conservation Area.

Reasons

5. Whilst the address of the property is given as the Hambrook Grove Hotel, the appeal property is now occupied as a private dwelling. The listing description refers to the building as a late 18C/early 19C house of three storeys which has
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a large central portico and later wings to each side. The Council describe the building as in the classical style, and the two storey side wings are understood to be later 19C additions. The building is finished in render over pennant rubble stone, the render being roughcast to the ground floor and lined out at first and second floor of the main block to create the appearance of rustication. The main block is 5 bays wide and the front elevation has 8 over 8 sash windows, symmetrically arranged about the central door and portico. The rear elevation is dominated by two full height curved bays separated by a single storey flat roofed entrance lobby.

6. Although the building has been subject to considerable alteration and more recent works associated with its return to a private dwelling, I consider that the significance of the building includes its strongly classical form and detailing. The rear elevation of the building, notwithstanding alterations to the western end, retains clear evidence of the building's historic form and appearance, particularly in respect of the full height curved bays and the symmetry of the main central block. The rear elevation therefore, whilst different in character and appearance from the north entrance elevation, exhibits a strong architectural form defined by the curved bays. Each of the bays includes three tall sash windows at both ground and first floor level, thereby offering wide ranging views.
7. The single storey extension joins the existing curved bay on the south elevation by means of a canted or angled wall which creates an awkward junction with the existing building. The overall depth of the extension from the south wall of the east wing means that the extension projects in front of the ground floor south-east facing window of the curved bay, thus restricting views from and of this window. Both of these elements of the proposal harm the integrity of the historic design and form of the listed building, thus diminishing its architectural interest.
8. The extension projects beyond the east wing of the building. This alters and detracts from the historic plan form of the building as well as harming views of the elevations. In relation to the south elevation in particular, the east-west length of the extension and its resulting horizontal appearance would contrast with and detract from the vertical emphasis of the two curved bays.
9. The proposals show that the top of the flat roof of the extension would be level with the head of the ground floor windows of the east elevation and only slightly higher than the head of the windows on the ground floor of the curved bay. Whilst this proposed height would not be inappropriate, the railings proposed around the perimeter of the roof would emphasise the presence of the flat roof and the creation of a first floor terrace, both features which are incongruous in the context of the historic building. The railings would also emphasise the inappropriate projection of the extension beyond the historic east elevation.
10. With regard to the windows in the extension, those which I saw during my site visit exhibited a different reflective quality from other windows in the building as a consequence of the double glazed units. Despite being part of new works, the windows would be seen in the context of principal elevations of the historic building where windows have single glazing. Some harm would arise from this aspect of the proposals.

11. The proposed style of doors at ground and first floor level would be out of keeping with the style of the building, however these are matters which could have been addressed by condition had the proposal been acceptable in other respects.
12. The photographs provided show structures subsequently taken down prior to building the existing extension. These photographs appear to confirm that the demolished structures were not of architectural or historic interest and therefore did not contribute to the building's special interest. The evidence also shows that there was an external staircase on the south elevation. The plans show that the former utility room extension on the south side of the building did not project in front of the south-east facing bay window nor did this extension project beyond the end of the east wing. The shed on the east side of the building is shown on the plans to have been a relatively small plywood structure set away from the east face of the building and linked to the listed building by a plywood covering or roof over a walkway. In contrast, the proposal seeks consent for a larger structure. Despite the benefits of removing the former structures, this does not create a precedent or justification for what is now sought.
13. I have taken into account the additions and alterations to the west wing of the building which the appellant refers to as discordant and incongruous. Whilst I do not dispute the appellant's assessment, this cannot provide a justification for further harm to the listed building. I have also noted the appellant's evidence regarding the previously poor condition of the building and the subsequent and considerable investment in various works including internal and external repairs. However, it is the proposals which are before me that form the basis of my decision.
14. Consequently although the footprint of the extension represents only a modest increase upon the overall size and floor area of the building as a whole, and the rendered finish of the extension would match that of the historic building, the siting and form of the proposed extension would harm the architectural composition.
15. Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon decision makers in considering whether to grant listed building consent to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. For the reasons set out above, the proposed extension would harm the significance of the building. I therefore find the proposals would fail to preserve the listed building.
16. I have had regard to relevant development plan policies. Core Strategy¹ Policy CS1 is a policy requiring high quality design relating to development proposals in general. Policy CS9 relates to managing the environment and heritage assets and requires heritage assets, amongst other matters, to be conserved, respected and enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance. Policy L13 of the adopted Local Plan² includes a requirement that alterations and additions retain the character and historic form of a building. The proposals do not comply with these policies.

¹ South Gloucestershire Core Strategy 2006 – 2027 Adopted December 2013

² South Gloucestershire Local Plan Adopted January 2006

Hambrook Conservation Area

17. Although not a reason for refusal, I have a duty to consider whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Hambrook Conservation Area. Hambrook Grove is clearly a significant building which makes a notable contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The building is set back from public roads and the extension as proposed would not be prominent in public views. Notwithstanding my conclusions with regard to the impact of the proposals on the listed building, it must follow that harm to the building would result in a measure of harm to the conservation area although such harm would be much less than substantial when the conservation area is considered as a whole.

Other matters

18. I have noted the support expressed for the proposal by a neighbour, including support for other works stated to have improved the building. I also note that the Parish Council have not objected to the proposals. However, these do not alter my findings on the main issue.

Conclusions

19. The National Planning Policy Framework requires great weight is to be given to the conservation of heritage assets. As such assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss requires clear and convincing justification. When assessed in the context of Paragraphs 132 to 134 of the Framework, the proposals would result in less than substantial harm to the listed building. However, there are no public benefits relating to this proposal which would be sufficient to outweigh the harm the proposal would cause.
20. For the reasons given above I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

J E Tempest

INSPECTOR