
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 20 June 2017

by C J Anstey BA (Hons) DipTP DipLA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 July 2017

Appeal A. Ref: APP/H0520/W/17/3168339

Old Castle Farmhouse, 45 Church Lane, Stibbington, Peterborough, PE8 6LP

- 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 S Kew against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01896/HHFUL, dated 8 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is (i) modification of the modern fenestration and the brick chimney breast previously inserted in the service wing. (ii) Replacement of the present aluminium glazing and external door to the 1979 Sun Room. (iii) Restoration of the Dining Room window to its original configuration and (iv) the repair and improvement of the existing 1979 first floor study dormer.
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Appeal B. Ref: APP/H0520/Y/17/3169297

Old Castle Farmhouse, 45 Church Lane, Stibbington, Peterborough, PE8 6LP

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr S Kew against Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01897/LBC is dated 8 September 2016.
 - The works proposed are (i) modification of the modern fenestration and the brick chimney breast previously inserted in the service wing. (ii) Replacement of the present aluminium glazing and external door to the 1979 Sun Room. (iii) Restoration of the Dining Room window to its original configuration and (iv) the repair and improvement of the existing 1979 first floor study dormer.
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Decisions

1. **Appeal A.** The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for (i) modification of the modern fenestration and the brick chimney breast previously inserted in the service wing. (ii) Replacement of the present aluminium glazing and external door to the 1979 Sun Room. (iii) Restoration of the Dining Room window to its original configuration and (iv) the repair and improvement of the existing 1979 first floor study dormer, at 45 Church Lane, Stibbington, Peterborough, PE8 6LP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/01896/HHFUL, dated 8 September 2016, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with drawing numbers PS/580/02, PS/580/05, PS/580/015A, PS/580/03, PS/580/22, PS/580/23, PS/580/24, PS/580/01, PS/580/14, PS/580/06, PS/580/04, PS/580/25, PS/580/13A, PS/580/20, and PS/580/21.
2. **Appeal B.** The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for (i) modification of the modern fenestration and the brick chimney breast previously inserted in the service wing. (ii) Replacement of the present aluminium glazing and external door to the 1979 Sun Room. (iii) Restoration of the Dining Room window to its original configuration and (iv) the repair and improvement of the existing 1979 first floor study dormer, at 45 Church Lane, Stibbington, Peterborough, PE8 6LP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/01897/LBC dated 8 September 2016., and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
- 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) The works hereby permitted shall be completed in accordance with drawing numbers PS/580/02, PS/580/05, PS/580/015A, PS/580/03, PS/580/22, PS/580/23, PS/580/24, PS/580/01, PS/580/14, PS/580/06, PS/580/04, PS/580/25, PS/580/13A, PS/580/20, and PS/580/21.
 - 3) No works shall take place until details of the design of the supporting beams and the reconfiguration of the staircase in the service wing, the replacement doors in the modern rear extension, the restoration works to the dining room bay window and the works to the service wing first floor dormer window, including plans/elevations/sections at an appropriate scale, together with the specification of materials to be used, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) Prior to the works being carried out a Schedule of the proposed works to the service wing first floor dormer window and the dining room bay window, including details of methods, materials and finishes, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

Main Issues

3. Old Castle Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building standing within the Stibbington Conservation Area. It is described in the listing as an early C18th former farmhouse with mid-C19th alterations and additions, constructed of squared limestone rubble with freestone dressings of two storeys with attics, and a service range to the south of one storey with attic.
4. The main issues, therefore, are firstly whether the proposals would preserve the Grade II listed Old Castle Farmhouse or features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses, and secondly the impact on the character and appearance of the Stibbington Conservation Area.

Reasons

Issue 1: Effect on the listed building

5. *Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990* states that 'in considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.' *Section 66(1) of this Act* also introduces an identical test when considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building. *Paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework)* makes it clear 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. This paragraph also makes it clear that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration.
6. Old Castle Farmhouse's significance arises from its historic and evidential values together with its aesthetically pleasing appearance as an historic rural farmhouse.
7. The Council accepts that the significance of the building would not be harmed by the majority of the proposed works in the appeal scheme, subject to the submission of appropriate details. In particular:
 - (a) the proposed French doors in the rear of the service wing would replace features of relatively recent origin;
 - (b) the proposed replacement glazing and doors in the rear late C20th flat roofed extension would replace modern features;
 - (c) the restoration of the dining room bay window in the front of the main wing and the re-instatement of its opening casements would be in keeping with the character of the building; and
 - (d) the works to the modern dormer window in the rear of the service wing would be in keeping with the character of the building.
8. Having carefully considered the material submitted by the parties and taking account of what I saw on my site visit I also consider that these elements of the scheme would preserve the Grade II listed building and would not harm features of special architectural interest it possesses.
9. At present the ground floor of the service wing contains two rooms, the kitchen and breakfast room, divided by a wall containing a chimney breast, with a plank door providing access between the two. Both these rooms are of modest size. Next to the chimney breast in the breakfast room there is a wooden cupboard. The scheme includes the removal of the chimney breast and adjoining wall, cupboard and door to facilitate the creation of a larger kitchen. Supporting beams would be inserted across the width of the wing to support the floor above. The chimney breast in Bedroom 4 above the breakfast room and the partition wall on the first floor would be retained as would the external stone-clad chimney.
10. The Council is opposed to the proposed removal of the chimney breast and adjoining wall from the ground floor of the service wing. It is argued for the

Council that the chimney breast and adjoining wall, cupboard and plank door are part of the historic fabric and features of the listed building and reflect a phase of the building's history.

11. The Heritage Impact Assessment prepared for the appellant contains a 'building sequence' drawing illustrating the phases of development of the building. This indicates that when the service wing (which was formerly a free-standing out building) was incorporated into the main house in the years prior to 1895 a new brick dividing partition associated with a new brick chimney breast and flue (faced externally above roof level with stone) were inserted. In view of this there are reasonable grounds for believing that the chimney breast and adjoining wall within the service wing were inserted towards the end of the C19th and were not part of the original fabric of the building. Consequently the creation of a larger kitchen would restore the building to its pre-1895 proportions.
12. On the basis of the material submitted and my site visit, I believe that the integrity of the C19th chimney breast has already been seriously compromised. In particular it is apparent that the chimney breast in the kitchen was removed some years ago and the chimney breast in Bedroom 5 above has been replaced with a chimney support. The red brickwork visible at the back of the fire-place in the breakfast room appears to be of fairly recent origin and forms part of a relatively modern flue. Consequently on the ground floor only the chimney breast within the breakfast room is likely to date from the late C19th and even this has been altered with the addition of a fire-surround of unsympathetic modern design and proportions. As regards the other elements proposed to be removed the cupboard in the breakfast room appears to date from the 1920s/1930s, whilst the plank door appears to have been re-used from elsewhere. I do not consider, therefore, that the cupboard and door constitute features of special historic interest.
13. In my view the removal of what remains of the late C19th chimney breast within the ground floor of the service wing is justified on the basis that it would secure the restoration of the building's pre-1895 proportions. Furthermore the size of kitchen provided would be more appropriate to the scale of this historic house. I am also mindful that the chimney breast on the first floor and the external chimney would remain unchanged.
14. I conclude, therefore, on the first main issue that the proposals would preserve the Grade II listed Old Castle Farmhouse and pay appropriate regard to the features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses.

Issue 2: Impact on the Conservation Area

15. The proposed alterations to the exterior of Old Castle Farmhouse are fairly limited and are designed to be in keeping with its appearance and historic significance. Consequently I conclude, therefore, on the second issue that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Stibbington Conservation Area.

Overall conclusion

16. I have found that the proposals would preserve the Grade II listed Old Castle Farmhouse and pay appropriate regard to the features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses. I have also found that the character and appearance of the Stibbington Conservation Area would be preserved. As the

proposals would not harm the significance of the asset there is no requirement to assess whether there are any public benefits arising from the scheme. This means that the proposals are not in conflict with the *Framework's* guidance on heritage assets and conservation areas, with *Policy En2: Character and Setting of a Listed Building* of the *Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1985)*, *Policy CS1: Sustainable development in Huntingdonshire* of the *Huntingdonshire Core Strategy (2009)*, or with *Policy LP31: Heritage Assets and their settings* of the *Draft Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036: Stage 3 (2013)*. These findings constitute compelling grounds for allowing both appeals subject to conditions. None of the other matters raised outweigh the considerations that have led to my decisions.

Conditions

17. I have considered the need for conditions in the light of the advice in the *Planning Policy Guidance*. Reference to the submitted plans is required to ensure that the scheme proceeds as approved. As regards the listed building consent various details of the proposed works need to be submitted for approval to ensure that they are in keeping with the character of the listed building and respect its fabric and features. Schedules of works for certain of the proposals are also required to ensure that methods, materials and finishes are appropriate to this heritage asset.

Christopher Anstey

Inspector