



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 June 2019

by Elaine Benson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/Y/18/3213377

Court Farm, Craswall, Hereford HR2 0PX

- 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 and Mrs T Heffer against the decision of Herefordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 182274, dated 19 June 2018, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2018.
 - The works proposed are remove the central dormer on south-east elevation and replace with two dormers. Open up the straight joints in the cellar to provide an external doorway on south-west elevation. Change the roof valleys between the existing farmhouse and the derelict wing from Welsh valleys to standard lead valleys.
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Decisions

1. The appeal is dismissed in part and listed building consent is refused for works to remove central dormer on south-east elevation and replace with two dormers.
2. The appeal is allowed in part and listed building consent is granted for works to open up the straight joints in the cellar to provide an external doorway on south-west elevation and to change the roof valleys between the existing farmhouse and the derelict wing from Welsh valleys to standard lead valleys at Court Farm, Craswall, Hereford HR2 0PX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 182274, dated 19 June 2018 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved drawing numbered 1510/2B, only so far as it applies to the approved elements.
 - 3) No works in relation to any of the features specified below shall commence until details are submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The work shall be carried out in full in accordance with such approved details;
 - Schedule of works for the insertion of new doorway, to include details of the removal of historic fabric.
 - 4) Before any works in relation to the materials specified below begins, details of the following construction materials shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority:

- A sample of the type of roofing material proposed;
- Treatment of eaves and soffits;
- Leadwork details (in accordance with LDA good practice) (if applicable).

The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

- 5) No joinery works shall commence until precise details of all relevant external doors and any other external joinery have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include:

- full size or 1:2 details and sections, and 1:20 elevations of each joinery item.
- cross references to the details and indexed on elevations on the approved drawings.
- colour scheme/surface finish.

The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matter

3. As set out in the heading above, there are 3 elements to this appeal. They are clearly severable, both physically and functionally, and I have therefore considered them separately. This approach would not result in any injustice to any of the parties as the merits of each element have been considered through the appeal process.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this appeal are whether the proposed works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Background and Context

5. Planning permission and listed building consent were granted in January 2018 for the comprehensive restoration of the appeal property, a listed farmhouse, including its re-roofing and the full reinstatement of a large derelict wing to form additional living accommodation. During pre-application discussions it became apparent that the works which are the subject of this appeal were contentious. They were not therefore included in the earlier application.
6. The Council raised no objections to the specification of lead roof valleys in its Decision Notice and none are made in this appeal. There is no remaining evidence of how the former roof valleys were constructed. Within this context, I agree that the use of lead valleys rather than Welsh valleys would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building. Accordingly, this decision focuses on the matters in dispute.

Listed Building

7. I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building and its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) States 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. Clear and convincing justification is required for any harm to, or loss of, significance of a designated heritage asset.

8. Court Farm is a Grade II listed upland border farmstead. It is built into the slope of a hill and accessed by a long, winding track. The main building contains a cellar and is built of natural stone with a stone tile roof. It dates from late 16th or early 17th century with 20th century alterations and restoration. Its formerly derelict rear wing is likely to date from the early 15th century. There is a cruck-framed stone barn nearby and other later lean-to additions.
9. The evidence indicates that the group of buildings is representative of historic farmsteads in the area which play an important role in defining its landscape character. The significance of these listed buildings is derived in part from the relatively small number and small scale of openings and their ratio to large unbroken areas of stonework and roofs. This characteristic is in part a response to the farmstead's location on the ridge of a valley in a remote and weather-exposed setting. A nearby footpath and bridleway increase the public views of the buildings in what is an otherwise rather remote area. I agree with the Council's assessment that part of the significance of the group is the simplicity of the farmstead which reflects its isolation in the valley and that the resulting austerity reinforces a sense of rural detachment.

Dormer Windows

10. The proposal would result in the removal of a small dormer window set close to the eaves in a broadly central location. The List Description describes this dormer window as having a 20th century glazing bar casement window, similar to the 2 ground floor windows. There is no dispute that the dormer window is not an original feature. Its structure indicates it has been rebuilt over the years by non-traditional building methods and it contains timber from different periods, including reused oak and modern softwood.
11. The Council considers that the window is unusual because it is positioned directly over a roof truss, but offset in the elevation, and has horizontal emphasis to admit natural light to both sides of the framing division. The dormer is significant for its aesthetic contribution to a prominent yet modest elevation. It has evidential value as a surviving example of early vernacular alteration that occurred when need dictated it and included the re-use of materials. The Council states that such alterations are a common and important feature of rural buildings of this type and age. The developmental changes that have taken place to the dormer window over the years in association with the conversion of the upper floor contribute towards the significance of the listed farmhouse.
12. The appeal proposal would introduce 2 larger dormer windows. They would interrupt the expanse of the roof plane which contributes significantly to the character and appearance of farmhouses of this type. I note that the proposed dormers would be traditionally constructed and detailed oak dormers, similar to those used at the Grade II listed The Terrett in Hay-on-Wye of which the appellants provide a photograph. However, this does not affect my conclusion that the proposed roof and dormer window works would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building, particularly the

roof - a feature of special architectural and historic interest. I conclude that this harm to the significance of the listed building would be less than substantial.

Formation of External Doorway to Cellar

13. There is a doorway into the cellar with steep and shallow steps. The proposed additional doorway would be timber, reflecting the character and materials of the existing square-headed wooden chamfered framed doorway with nail-studded door and a similar wooden framed doorway with battened door which was formerly an internal door leading to the north-west wing, as described in the List description.
14. The Council indicates that gable-entry stone houses typically had one opening situated on the more sheltered side of the house and that the exposed location, orientation of the building and prevailing weather conditions have largely determined the sparse appearance and treatment of the elevation where the proposed door would be located. However, in the appellants' view, the purpose of the internal straight joints was to frame an earlier opening, indicating that there was formally a doorway in this elevation of the cellar. Although there is no lintel and no straight joints in the external stonework, it is known that the front wall and this gable were severely damaged and that much rebuilding was undertaken. This could well explain why there are no external remnants of a doorway opening.
15. Nonetheless, the cellar doorway would be some 450 mm below the existing ground level and accessed by steps. It would be largely obscured by the adjacent ground levels. Furthermore, the more dominant chimney breast and an adjacent flight of stone steps would be significantly more prominent than the doorway in the longer views of the farmstead which sits above the valley and is visible from a great distance.
16. I have considered all of the evidence including the internal and external stonework and its coursing. In my judgement the proposed doorway would have more of the appearance of a low-level window when viewed externally. As the Council indicates, the introduction of a small window into such buildings would not necessarily be uncharacteristic.
17. The use of the cellar as it exists would be compromised by the stepped access. I consider that the new doorway would be an intervention which would allow for the full use of the basement whilst also respecting the architecture of the building and would not harm the character, appearance or significance of the listed building.

Setting

18. In my judgement the replacement dormer windows would be seen as exceptional and intrusive elements in the front roof slope in views of the listed building within its historic, rural setting and that this would amount to harm. Having regard to the limited views of the proposed cellar doorway in the wider landscape, I am satisfied that the setting of the listed building would be preserved by the proposed works. I do not consider that the proposed roof or cellar level works would have any effect on the setting of the listed building in terms of how it is otherwise experienced.

Conclusions

19. I conclude that the removal of the existing dormer window and its replacement by 2 dormer windows would harm the character, appearance and significance of the listed building and I have not found clear and convincing justification for this harm to significance. Great weight should be given to the asset's conservation irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. Using the language of the Framework, the identified less than substantial harm to part of the significance of the listed farmhouse and its setting should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
20. Whilst the proposed dormer windows would allow further light to enter the upper floor bedrooms, the extensive works to the farmhouse and the wing which have already been approved have provided for adequate light levels in these areas. The future occupation of the building as a dwelling, its optimum viable use, is not therefore dependent on the provision of the proposed dormer windows. They would provide a private benefit for the appellants; however no public benefits would be secured. The identified harm to the listed building and its setting would not therefore be outweighed.
21. The roof and dormer windows element of the proposed works would therefore conflict with Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2015 Policy LD4 which, in summary, requires that proposals protect, conserve and where possible enhance heritage assets. Furthermore, there would be conflict with the relevant legislation and guidance within the Framework.
22. In respect of the cellar doorway and roof valleys, I conclude that the proposed works would amount to modest changes to this designated heritage asset and would not harm its significance. I therefore find there is no conflict with the foregoing policies and guidance.
23. The appeal has been dealt with on its merits, in accordance with its site-specific circumstances, my statutory duties and relevant national and local policies. For the reasons set out above the appeal is allowed in part and dismissed in part.

Conditions

24. In relation to the cellar door and roof valley works it is necessary to impose a condition requiring development to be carried out in accordance with the approved drawings for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of achieving a satisfactory form of development. Larger scale details, specifications and schedules of works relating to the removal of historic fabric, joinery, roofing and other materials are required to protect the character and appearance of the listed building. Accordingly, details are required to be submitted to the Council for approval.

Elaine Benson

INSPECTOR