The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 September 2019

by S Thomas BSc (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/B9506/D/19/3233083
Homestead Cottage, Southampton Road, Godshill SP6 2LG

- 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 Richard Sullivan against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
- The application Ref 19/00153, dated 20 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2019.
- The development proposed is to retain cladding to the dormer sides and front with a change of colour.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of development on the application form was lengthy and made reference to aspects which were not acts of development. In the heading above I have therefore used the more succinct description provided by the appellant in Section E of the Appeal form.

Procedural Matter

3. The cladding has been erected and therefore I am considering this part of the appeal retrospectively.

4. During the course of the appeal the Council have adopted the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2016-2036) on the 29th August 2019. This replaces the New Forest Local Development Framework Core Strategy and Development Management Policies DPD (2010) against which the planning application was determined. I sought the parties comments on the adoption of the new Local Plan and in summary they have confirmed that the Core Strategy policies (DP1, DP6, CP7 and CP8) are carried forward to the new Local Plan with no substantive change to the policy stance.

5. Therefore, for clarity, the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) (Local Plan) policies that are now relevant to the determination of this appeal are policies SP16, SP17, DP2 and DP18. I have therefore determined the appeal in line with these policies.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are the effect of the development on (i) the character and appearance of a non-designated heritage asset and (ii) whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Western Escarpment Conservation area (CA).

Reasons

7. Homestead Cottage is located in a prominent position adjacent to Southampton Road within the Western Escarpment Conservation Area. The property is identified in the Western Escarpment Conservation Area Character Appraisal (CACA) as being of local, vernacular or cultural interest. The Council identify it as a non-designated heritage asset. The property is a focal point along Southampton Road, and given its design and orientation it contributes positively to the local area. The elevation fronting Southampton Road forms a key component of its character and to the significance of this building.

8. The large sloping roof which continues below the main eaves height fronting the road is a key feature of the building, contrasting with the roof on the principal elevation which overlooks the property's garden. This together with the red brick chimneys set against the slate roof contribute significantly to its character. The Council identify that the large dormer window that extends a considerable distance across the roof is a more recent addition.

9. Whilst there are varying styles of properties and materials in the surrounding area, the size and bulk of the dormer window makes it a dominant and discordant feature on this property. The cladding that has been added to the dormer appears stark and detracts significantly from the appearance of the property, contrasting with the characterful brick walls, chimneys and slate roof. Furthermore, the cladding boards run horizontally across the dormer contrasting with the pattern of the roof tiles. Whilst the cladding has a grain effect rather than a flat appearance this modern material is not reflective of local character. None of this would be overcome by merely changing the colour of the cladding.

10. The New Forest National Park Local Development Framework Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD) advises that claddings can be very intrusive. I consider this to be the case here given the property's prominent position in the street scene.

11. I acknowledge the appellant's point that the previous slate tiles on the dormer required replacement, and his preference for a low maintenance replacement which would also reduce opportunities for insects to enter through. However, the materials chosen in the form of cladding causes harm to the character of the property and will not weather over time like traditional materials. There are no public benefits I find which justify the use of this material.

12. For the reasons identified above I conclude that the development would result in harm to the significance of the non designated heritage asset Homestead Cottage and conflicts with policies SP16, SP17, DP2 and DP18 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan (2019) (LP). These policies seek to ensure development proposals conserve and enhance the significance or special interest of non-designated and designated heritage assets and ensure that new

development demonstrates high quality design which respects local character and distinctiveness.

13. The CACA identifies that the Western Escarpment CA lies to the western edge of the National Park boundary. It is an area of historic landscape and settlement which has developed its unique character over more than a thousand years. It consists of a small number of historic settlements with medieval origins which have developed along the western escarpment. The area consists of a mixture of building styles of varying ages. The area is divided into 11 character areas. The appeal property is located in character area F which is referred to as Godshill and surrounding agricultural encroachment into the Forest.

14. I have already found that the cladding unacceptably detracts from the character and appearance of Homestead Cottage. Given the property's prominent location, by extension, it also has a diminishing effect on the character and appearance of the CA. Whilst this would not reach the high hurdle of substantial harm, it would nonetheless result in serious harm that requires clear and convincing justification. I acknowledge that the appellant has gone to significant efforts to refurbish the property. However, the cladding has resulted in a harmful addition to a non-designated heritage asset in a prominent position within a historic location. I also acknowledge reference to the appellant's comments regarding perceived unsympathetic additions to buildings in the area. Nevertheless, this would not justify further harm.

15. Whilst there may be personal benefits in choosing a low maintenance replacement for the slate tiles on the dormer there are no public benefits which would outweigh the less than substantial harm found. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with LP policies SP17, SP16, DP2 and DP18 and the Framework.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons identified above, the appeal is dismissed.

Stephen Thomas

INSPECTOR