



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 8 January 2020

by Mr Kim Bennett BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 January 2020

Appeal A Ref: APP/E2205/W/19/3224162

The Granary, Church Lane, Hothfield TN26 1EL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Simon Brock against Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/01219/AS, is dated 29 June 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a conservatory.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/E2205/Y/19/3223990

The Granary, Church Lane, Hothfield TN26 1EL

- 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 Simon Brock against Ashford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00973/AS, is dated 29 June 2018.
 - The works proposed are the erection of a conservatory.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The applications were made on a single form and the description of development is thus the same for both. I will therefore consider both appeals as part of this single decision letter.
3. The Granary is a Grade II listed building and forms part of Hothfield Conservation Area. As such I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) and have determined the appeals in accordance with those provisions.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building.

Reasons

5. The Granary is located to the eastern side of Church Lane and to the south west of St. Margaret's Church which is a Grade I listed building. Together with

Dovecote Cottage and The Stables beyond that, the three buildings are all that remains of Hothfield Place and the formal range of ancillary buildings associated with that estate. The Granary is brick built with a pitched and hipped clay tile roof. It was converted to residential use in the 1980s and part of the works involved accommodation within the roofspace together with two large rear facing dormer windows.

6. The proposal involves a conservatory extending beyond part of the rear elevation and alongside the boundary wall with the adjoining church. It would have a shallow pitched roof with a ridge height just under the eaves of The Granary, and would be a largely glazed structure above a low brick plinth wall.
7. The Granary was built in the late C18 and its significance derives mainly from its simple rectangular plan form with limited openings on three sides in keeping with its original function as an ancillary farm building. At the rear there are two doors either side of a large central window. Above each of the openings are round headed timber windows with gauged brick arches above.
8. The special historic interest of the building has already been somewhat diminished by the overly large rear dormers. However, the essential character and simple form of the former farm building remains largely intact. The proposed conservatory, with its extensive glazing, would introduce an overly domestic addition to the building which would be at odds with that character and would cause harm as a result. The conservatory would also unbalance the simple rectangular plan form of the building and lose the symmetry of the rear elevation by enclosing one of the round headed window openings and doorway beneath. The rounded arch to the upper part of the opening, appears to be historic fabric, and was clearly visible in the 1940s as evidenced by a photograph from that time in the supporting heritage statement.
9. In reaching the above findings, I note that they would be consistent with advice from Historic England¹ which says that porches and conservatories can often be alien in character to historic farm buildings, and that any extension should carefully safeguard the significance of the main structure. The fact that some harm has already been caused by the rear dormers is not a good reason to further erode the historic interest of the building. For a combination of these reasons the proposal would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.
10. The harm caused would be less than substantial and under such circumstances, paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework says that such harm should be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. In that regard I note that the building is currently in residential use with apparently adequate amenities, and whilst I understand the desire of the appellant for increased floorspace, it does not appear to be a fundamental requirement for continued residential use. Accordingly, I attach little weight to that issue. No other public benefits have been drawn to my attention which would outweigh the harm identified.
11. The proposal would also be contrary to policies SP6, HOU8, ENV3a and ENV13 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030 in that it would not be a high quality design, would not demonstrate particular regard for the design and detail of a

¹ Historic England – Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings 2017

vernacular building, and would cause harm to the significance of a heritage asset which would not be outweighed by any public benefit.

12. With regard to the effect of the development upon the Conservation Area, the conservatory would be limited in size and largely obscured from public and private views, and I am satisfied it would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Similarly, there would be no harm to the setting of the adjoining St. Margaret's Church as the conservatory would sit below the high boundary wall between the church and The Granary and would not be apparent or obscure views of the church either from outside the site or within it. I note that the Council arrived at similar conclusions in respect of both issues.

Conclusions

13. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters, I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Kim Bennett

INSPECTOR