



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 March 2020

by H Porter BA(Hons) MScDip IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 March 2020

Appeal A Ref: APP/Y3940/W/19/3240171

The Gables, Main Road, Corston SN16 0DH

- 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 Stuart Freegard against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/05395/FUL, dated 4 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is removal of modern conservatory, erection of single storey extension to provide open plan kitchen/dining area and boot room.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Y3940/W/19/3240172

The Gables, Main Road, Corston SN16 0DH

- 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 Stuart Freegard against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/05698/LBC, dated 4 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 August 2019.
 - The works proposed are removal of modern conservatory, erection of single storey extension to provide open plan kitchen/dining area and boot room.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Background and main issues – both appeals

3. These linked appeals concern the Grade II listed building known as The Gables and follow appeal decisions dismissing planning permission and listed building consent for the removal of a conservatory and erection of a single-storey extension (APP/Y3940/W/18/3208266 and APP/Y3940/Y/18/3208267). I see no reason to depart from the previous Inspector's findings in respect of describing the listed building, its form, and its overall special interest.
4. Whilst the previous appeal decisions are of some relevance to the proposals before me, I remain mindful that the statutory duty and presumptive desirability of preserving listed buildings rests on the decision-maker.
5. The main issue in both appeals is whether the proposals would preserve the listed building and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons – both appeals

6. Like the previous Inspector, I consider the significance and special interest of The Gables to be primarily associated with the architectural character of the building and its historic plan, form and the detailing in its fabric, including much of the lean-to extension. I also agree that the existing conservatory contributes little to the significance of the building and its removal would not harm the building's architectural or historic interest.
7. The extant scheme, from what I have read, is very similar to that previously dismissed. The foremost difference being a slight stepping-in of the proposed side boot room element by 450mm to the proposed lean-to extension. Whilst the latest iteration might expose the stone quoins on the building's primary, historic rear elevation, such a comparatively minor design change would not satisfactorily address the previous Inspector's concerns, nor would it preserve the significance and special interest of the listed building.
8. Indeed, the previous Inspector identified that the preceding scheme would extend almost to the flank of the main building and enclose the remaining exposed section on one side; this would still be the case. Even though the quoins would be left exposed, the wrap-around portion would continue to conceal significant components of the extant structure. It is not just the constructional fabric that would be obscured, but also legibility of the historic extent of the original building and the way it has been modified and extended over time.
9. Like the dismissed appeals scheme, the current proposal would likewise have a pitched-roof, the ridge of which would be above the eaves-line of the principal historic range. To some degree interpretation of detailed design is a matter of subjectivity, however, in the absence of a meaningfully reduced footprint particularly where it extends beyond the short, end wall of the lean-to, the proposed extension would have an uncomfortable relationship with the appeal building. Fundamentally, the proposals would lack architectural subtlety and would undermine the authenticity of the building's architectural character, its historic plan, form and fabric, which would cause harm. Replacing stone walls with glazing, as suggested by the appellant, would not overcome this impact.
10. Given the scale and nature of the proposals, the degree of harm to the significance of the heritage asset would be less than substantial, which should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing its optimum viable use.
11. It is clear that the proposed works and development would not be necessary to secure the building's optimum viable use, which is already in use as a dwelling, to which permission has been granted for a flat-roof kitchen/diner extension. The pitched-roof and gable feature are details of taste that do not mitigate the harm I have identified. Though I recognise the wider site is a small-holding and that a boot room would be a convenience, such a provision would not amount to a public benefit. Moreover, the particular wants and circumstances of the occupants of the listed building will change over time, whereas the harm arising from the proposals would be permanent.
12. All things considered; I do not find the sum of public benefits would be sufficient to outweigh the harm to the significance of the heritage asset.

Conclusion – both appeals

13. The works and development would fail to preserve the listed building, or its features of special architectural or historic interest, contrary to the clear expectations of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. I have not seen evidence that the appeal site falls within the Neighbourhood Plan Area of the Malmesbury Neighbourhood Plan Volume II – Design Guide, 2015. That aside, there would be conflict with Policies 57 and 58 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy, 2015, which, amongst other things, require new developments, including extensions, to be sympathetic to and to conserve historic buildings and conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. Conflict would also arise with the historic environment policies within the National Planning Policy Framework, revised February 2019, and which gives great weight to the conservation of heritage assets.
14. The overarching statutory duty to preserve listed buildings must be given considerable importance and weight. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that both Appeal A and Appeal B should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSPECTOR