



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 June 2020

by S Edwards MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/Y/20/3244203

Vine Cottage, West Street, Winterborne Stickland DT11 0NT

- 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 Mrs Charlotte Stephens against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref 2/2019/0691/LBC, dated 8 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 August 2019.
 - The works proposed are regularisation of works to install lead flashing around the two chimneys.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 1 April 2019, North Dorset District Council ceased to exist and became part of a new Unitary Authority known as Dorset Council. The development plans for the merged Local Planning Authorities will remain in place for the area within the new Unitary Authority they relate to until such time as they are revoked or replaced. I shall therefore determine the appeal having regard to the policies set out within the North Dorset Local Plan Part 1¹ (LPP1).
3. The description of the works as detailed within the application form has been amended in subsequent documents. I have adopted the description included on the Council's decision notice, which reflects the extent of the works before me more concisely. The works have been carried out and I shall therefore determine the appeal on that basis.
4. As the site lies in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the works preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed Vine Cottage, and the character or appearance of the Winterborne Stickland Conservation Area.

Reasons

6. Located within the Winterborne Stickland Conservation Area, the appeal site comprises a Grade II listed building, which dates from the early 19th century.

¹ January 2016.

The significance of this designated heritage asset principally derives from its architectural and historic interest as a traditional Dorset style cottage, characterised by its impressive thatched roof and simple flush ridge line, banded brick and flint walls. Furthermore, the prominent chimney stacks add to the architectural composition of the listed property.

7. The appeal property, together with the Grade I listed church and other listed cottages sited in close proximity, give this historic village a unified character. Accordingly, the listing description refers to the group value which these properties hold collectively, thus contributing to the character and appearance of the Winterborne Stickland Conservation Area. The richness of the traditional architecture and the broadly consistent palette of materials, together with the surviving historic core of the village, contribute to the significance of the conservation area as a settlement of traditional and rural character.
8. The dwelling has been recently re-thatched, and lead flashing has been installed around the two brick chimney stacks situated in the centre and to the right of the roof, in replacement of the mortar fillets which had been previously in place. As I was able to observe as part of my site visit, mortar fillets around chimney stacks are commonly found on thatched properties throughout the locality.
9. The lead aprons which have been installed around the chimney stacks however unduly stand out as intrusive and modern additions, which interrupt the uniformity of the thatched roof and harmfully detract from the traditional appearance of the cottage. Consequently, the works have undermined the architectural composition of this Grade II listed building, to the detriment of its significance. Furthermore, by reason of the appeal property's visual prominence within the street scene, and its roof in particular, the unauthorised works have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the conservation area.
10. It is accepted that the property has suffered from damp problems through water ingress, which the appellant has sought to address by carrying out remedial works, notably by applying sealants. As detailed within the Council's submissions, this could explain why the cement flashings did not adhere well to the brickwork. However, it remains unclear whether the use of lime mortar fillets or more substantial chimney repair works were considered when the property was re-thatched and, if so, why lead flashings were preferred to other options. Additionally, limited information has been provided to explain why lead flashing was not solely applied to the failing chimney, thus increasing the identified harm. Having regard to the evidence before me, I am not convinced that all appropriate options have been fully explored to preserve the significance of the listed cottage.
11. My attention has been drawn to other examples of thatched cottages with lead flashings, which include the Grade II listed properties situated either side of the appeal site. However, I have not been presented with substantive evidence demonstrating that these works have been carried out with the benefit of listed building consent, and these examples have therefore no bearing on my decision.
12. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), great weight should be afforded to the conservation of designated heritage assets. The harm to the significance of Vine Cottage and to

the character and appearance of the Winterborne Stickland Conservation Area is less than substantial, a matter to which I attach considerable importance and weight, having regard to my statutory duties. In such circumstances, the identified harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use. However, I have not been presented with any public benefits, which would outweigh the identified harm.

13. Given the above, the works fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, but also the character and appearance of the Winterborne Stickland Conservation Area. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraphs 194 and 196 of the Framework and conflict with Policy 5 of the LPP1 which seeks, among other things, to ensure that proposals affecting a heritage asset are assessed, having regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of that asset. As a result, the works are not in accordance with the development plan.

Other Matters

14. The appeal site is also located within the Dorset Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Paragraph 172 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in AONBs, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. As the proposal relates to an existing building located at the heart of the village of Winterborne Stickland, I am satisfied that the works are not harmful to the landscape character and scenic beauty of the Dorset AONB.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR