
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 June 2020

by A Blicq BSc (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N2535/Y/19/3242677

12 The Green, Reepham, Lincoln LN3 4DH

- 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 Gail Wilkinson against the decision of West Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref 139702, dated 19 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 September 2019.
 - The works proposed are erection of tiled canopy over the front door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appellant submitted a third canopy proposal as part of the appeal documents. However, the evidence suggests that this was not part of the information upon which the Council made its decision. Consequently, I have excluded it from my reasoning as to do otherwise could be prejudicial to the Council.
3. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) (England) Act 1990 (the Act) confers on the decision maker a statutory duty to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. This duty applies to listed building appeals. As such, although the harm to the conservation area is not mentioned in the Council's evidence, I have considered it appropriate to consider this in my reasoning.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building known as 10 - 16 The Green, (also known as Pembertons Place), or any special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Reepham Conservation Area (RCA).

Reasons

Listed Building

5. Number 12 is a mid-terrace limestone dwelling in a line of five, four of which have near identical form and typology. The Historic England listing states that the cottages date from the early 19th and 20th centuries. The entire terrace

constitutes the listed building and Historic England has attributed the terrace as having Group Value.

6. When viewed from The Green, the terrace forms a continuous two storey façade with low eaves, punctuated by four pairs of windows at regular intervals. At the rear, what appears to have been a courtyard area with stores and other outbuildings, has now been replaced with individual narrow gardens, each leading to an entrance door. Although I noticed minor differences between the windows, the overall impression is a striking uniformity across both front and rear elevations, arising from a regular repetition of window and door openings, and their treatments. The scale of those openings, and their positioning and repetition on the long flat elevations is consistent with the building's origins and represents a local and simple vernacular style. Although views of the rear elevation are interrupted by vegetation and boundary treatments, the notable consistency evident on the building's front elevation appears to be in place at the rear.
7. The significance of Pembertons Place is therefore derived from its intact historic fabric, and its demonstration of simple vernacular building techniques and detailing. The conformity and consistency of No 12 with its adjoining dwellings makes an important and positive contribution to the appreciation of the terrace.
8. The appellant wishes to add a small canopy over the entrance to No 12. Two designs were submitted, one having a dual pitched form and the other a flat canopy form, both supported by brackets. However, there is nothing before me to indicate that either design would be appropriate on a terrace of this design and age, and both would appear to be associated with a later period or grander building styles.
9. Moreover, a wall mounted canopy would disrupt the flat rear elevation of Pembertons Place, and in so doing would diminish and dilute its significance. A canopy would not necessarily affect the door frame or construction but it would be prominent and detract from the simplicity and consistency of the terrace's rear elevation. This reasoning is supported by the RCA appraisal which states that historic buildings have been spoilt by inappropriate and unsympathetic additions. Moreover, although seemingly a small addition, it could lead to pressure for more alterations leading to the incremental disfigurement of this seemingly original facade.
10. It is argued that canopies are common to buildings of this type. However, there is nothing before me to suggest that where such canopies now exist, that their design is contemporaneous with the host building.
11. Two local examples have been brought to my attention. However, the porch at the listed Larburnum Farmhouse has side walls and windows. Moreover, the host building has rather grander proportions than Pembertons Place and the porch is central and proportionate to a detached three bay front elevation. Pembertons Place is an altogether more modest structure whose significance is derived from its small scale and simplicity.
12. Cobs House is also a house of larger proportions than No 12. Furthermore, both Cobs House and Larburnum Farmhouse are distinct buildings rather than an integral part of a larger entity whose significance lies in the unity of the

whole. Moreover, there is nothing before me to suggest that Cobs House is listed.

13. With regard to the provisions of the Act and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the assessment of special architectural and historic interest is integral to any consideration of the impact of works on heritage assets. In this case the listed building's special and historic interest is its inherent simple vernacular style. Development that detracts from or dilutes that simple vernacular style, as would be the case here, would have a harmful impact.
14. Moreover, the importance of historic unity is set out in the principles of selection for listed buildings¹. The canopy would add ornamentation to a group example of simple vernacular architecture, and would detract from the flat elevation of the terrace as a whole. This would diminish the significance of the listed building and would amount to less than substantial harm as set out in Paragraph 196 of the Framework. The Framework sets out that such harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this instance the benefits would be private, relating to the occupiers of No 12.
15. I agree that the terrace's rear elevation is not visible from The Green, and views are obscured by garden boundary treatments. However, the intrinsic historic value or special features of the terrace are not predicated on visibility from the public domain, which in any case may change over time.
16. The appellant argues that the terrace was extended at the rear in the early 20th century but although local knowledge is cited there is nothing before me to substantiate this argument. I noticed that the rear section of stonework on the terrace's southern flank appeared to have different coursing and was not keyed in. Nonetheless, there could be many reasons for this, and the rebated rear extension on the end dwelling shown on the 1887 map had been only partly filled by 1905. Although there is a shallower roof slope above the rear section of the terrace, the tiles seem identical, and the fenestration and design of the rear elevation are strikingly similar to the front. Moreover, there is no evidence that the cottages originally had doors onto The Green. It seems reasonable to assume that the sole entry faced onto a shared courtyard with washing facilities. As such I am not satisfied that the rear section of Pembertons Place is necessarily 20th century addition.
17. I appreciate that the appellant has raised issues of water ingress and shelter. However, the rear elevation of these cottages does not appear particularly exposed, and there is nothing before me to indicate that other options have been investigated and dismissed.
18. I conclude that the works would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Pembertons Place. In this regard it would be contrary to Section 16 of the Act, and Section 16 of the Framework.

Conservation Area

19. The irregular and small scale pattern of period buildings around The Green and Church Lane suggest that these were part of the original village core. Traditional limestone cottages, such as those at Pembertons Place and Rose Cottage have simple shapes and proportions, and occupy prominent positions

¹ Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings, DDCMS November 2018

in the street scene. I conclude that these simple cottages are a key feature of the area and that the significance of the RCA is derived from its historic layout and fabric.

20. However, the rear elevation of Pembertons Place is not visible from The Green and I am satisfied that a canopy over No 12's entrance would have a neutral effect on the appreciation of the RCA. The works would preserve or enhance the overall character or appearance of the RCA and there would be no conflict with the provisions of Section 72(1) of the Act, or Section 16 of the Framework. However, this does not alter the weight I give to the harm to the listed building arising from these works.

Other matters

21. The appellant has raised concerns regarding procedural issues but these are outside the remit of the appeal.

Conclusion

22. In the light of the above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Blicq

INSPECTOR