
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 June 2020

by Jonathan Hockley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/Y/19/3243012

Mill Cottage, 8 Henley Road, Great Alne B49 6HX

- 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 Sarah Robson against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01123/LBC, dated 18 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 July 2019.
 - The works proposed are a single storey side garden room extension.
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This decision is issued in accordance with Section 56(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and supersedes the decision issued on 29 June 2020.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. This appeal relates to a refusal to grant listed building consent. I am not aware of any concurrent appeal against a refusal of planning permission submitted at the same time, although I am aware of later appeals submitted at the same site. My considerations below relate solely to the refusal of listed building consent 19/01123/LBC.
3. The Council reason for refusal raises concern over a proposed entrance to the garden room to be provided through an end chimney stack, as shown on plan P-01 C1819-07 D. Subsequent comments from the appellant state that this is not the intention with an access proposed to the south of this. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the Grade II listed building.

Reasons

5. Mill Cottage lies towards the eastern side of Great Alne and forms the left hand property of a pair of 17th/18th century one storey with attic cottages with rear additions from the 19th century. The cottages form a cohesive pair with matching front elevations to Henley Road consisting of central solid plank doors flanked by a single window, set under 19th century brick dormers within a tiled roof with brick end stacks. The building is stated to be built in English bond

brick on the listing but instead appear to have a variant of English garden wall bond, with four courses of stretchers for every course of headers. All openings on the façade have segmental brick arches over. To the right side of the pair of cottages lies an access and parking area, with an orchard style cottage garden on the left hand side, adjacent to Mill Cottage.

6. The setting of the cottages in the street scene facing onto the main road through the village, and their retained architectural simplicity, integrity, and their symmetrical nature on their façade are important parts of the buildings' special interest and significance.
7. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses. Policy CS.8 of the Core Strategy¹ states that the District's historic environment will be protected and enhanced for its inherent value and for the enjoyment of present and future residents and visitors, with priority given to protecting and enhancing the wide range of historic and cultural assets that contribute to the character and identity of the District, including listed buildings.
8. The proposal seeks to erect a single storey extension to the left side of Mill Cottage. This would be a tiled pitched roof, oak framed structure, with partial brick plinth and windows to sides, and full-length opening doors on the eastern elevation. The pitch of the roof would be shallower than that of Mill Cottage and the building would be accessed via a new opening to the south of the end chimney stack, where an existing window is present.
9. By extending the physical form of Mill Cottage to the side the size and mass of the proposed extension would substantially unbalance the pair of listed cottages, of which their retained matching façade is a key part of their significance. While my attention is drawn to other previous extensions to Mill Cottage and its neighbour, these are set significantly further back or are more superficial and do not affect the façade of the listed building in the same way. The proposed extension is set virtually flush to the front elevation of the property and would physically and visually extend the building to the detriment of the special architectural interest of the Grade II listed building. The extension into the cottage garden area of the property would also adversely affect the setting of the listed building, by building upon this space which currently contributes to the significance of the heritage asset.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes it clear that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a listed building, great weight should be given to its conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration of the heritage asset, and as they are irreplaceable, any harm should require clear and convincing justification. For the reasons given above I consider the proposal would result in harm being caused to the significance of this listed building. However, as the works would only affect a small part of the fabric of the building, I am satisfied that the degree of harm caused would be less than substantial.
11. In such situations the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal, including securing the asset's optimum use. The proposal would provide additional living space for the appellant and I appreciate would

¹ Stratford-on-Avon Core Strategy 2011-2031, Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

enhance their enjoyment of the property, providing more space for a family home, providing an opportunity for the appellant to stay in a property and a location where they enjoy living. However, leaving aside whether the appellant's enjoyment of the property can properly be regarded as a public benefit, the property appears to adequately function as a dwelling already and I do not consider therefore that the extension is required to provide its optimum viable use. It is well maintained by the current owner and I find no convincing justification for the proposal. As a consequence, what public benefits there might be are insufficient to outweigh the harm caused.

12. My attention is drawn to various extensions to other listed buildings within the village. I do not have the full details of such works but I viewed as many of these as was possible from public areas during my site visit. However, of those that were visible it did not appear to me that any of them were directly comparable with this case. Furthermore, each case must be considered on its own merits. I also note comments relating to houses constructed in the village, which is within the Green Belt, due to local community need. However, this is not directly comparable to this proposal which I am required under the terms of the Act to assess the desirability of preserving the listed building.
13. I note comments relating to alternative designs and proposals for a side extension. I have considered the proposed works on the basis of the submitted plans as those were the ones that the Council made their decision upon.

Conclusions

14. I conclude that the proposed works would not preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building. Therefore, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR