



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 20 July 2020

by S Edwards MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 September 2020

Appeal A Ref: APP/C1760/W/20/3249174

Roumain Cottage, Station Road, Over Wallop SO20 8HZ

- 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 Nick Lester against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03023/FULLN, dated 19 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'single storey rear extension to provide extended dining/family room and provision of dormer window and relocation of oil tank'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/C1760/Y/20/3249178

Roumain Cottage, Station Road, Over Wallop SO20 8HZ

- 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 Nick Lester against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03025/LBWN, dated 19 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2020.
 - The works proposed are described as 'proposed new window to first floor and construction of rear extension'.
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Appeal C Ref: APP/C1760/Y/20/3249171

Roumain Cottage, Station Road, Over Wallop SO20 8HZ

- 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 Nick Lester against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02837/LBWN, dated 26 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 February 2020.
 - The works proposed are described as 'replacement of three existing ground floor windows with slimline double glazing and the alteration to a first floor window, including the incorporation of slimline double glazing'.
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Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal C

3. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

4. As the site comprises a listed building located in a conservation area, 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).
5. The proposed development and works are of a similar nature, and relate to the same property. I shall therefore consider the planning and listed building consent appeals in a single document, in the interests of brevity.
6. Listed building consent was notably refused in respect of the relocation of the oil tank. The Council accept that this particular aspect of the proposal does not require listed building consent, and I shall therefore only consider the concerns raised in that regard as part of Appeal A. This is reflected in the description of the proposed development which is included within the banner heading. I have adopted the description included within the appeal form, which refers to the relocation of the oil tank and is therefore more accurate.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is whether the proposed development and works would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building known as Roumain Cottage, including its setting.

Reasons

Site description

8. Located within the Nether, Over and Middle Wallop Conservation Area, the appeal property is a two-storey cottage dating from the 18th century, which was formally listed in 1984. The building's core is constructed of rendered cob, whilst rendered brick and timber-clad extensions were added at a later stage. The front of the property is characterised by two-light timber casement windows and a prominent rendered brick gabled porch which was built in the early 20th century. The whole property is covered by an impressive thatched roof, including a catslide feature over the timber-clad extension, to which the prominent red brick chimney stacks add contrast and further interest.
9. Given the above, I find that the significance of this Grade II listed building derives principally from its architectural and historic interest as an attractive traditional cottage reflecting the local area's rural vernacular. The subsequent extensions are also of special interest, by revealing how the cottage has been adapted and altered overtime. The appeal site is bounded by a woodland area to the north, agricultural land to the west and residential properties to the east. This pleasant, semi-rural setting, as well as the landscaped aspects within the site itself, further add to the significance of this designated heritage asset.

Single storey rear extension

10. The proposed single storey rear extension would fill in the current L-shape created by the appeal building and previous additions, and would require the removal of part of the rear timber-clad outshot and catslide thatch. The appellant's submissions suggest that the timber lean-to extension was added to

Roumain Cottage between 1871 and 1910, and the thatched catslide element may have been added at the same time. Although the evidence clearly indicates that the roof above the existing utility room, in particular, was constructed using modern, machine-cut timbers, there is nevertheless no doubt that the earlier brick extensions and the sweeping catslide roof are of historic interest. As noted above, the manner in which the appeal property has been adapted and extended over time to improve the living conditions of its occupiers contribute to the building's historic interest.

11. The proposed extension would be characterised by its assertive contemporary design, which would be primarily glazed and covered with a flat green roof. Although a contemporary design approach, using overtly modern materials, may in some instances be appropriate, the proposed single storey extension would in this particular case harmfully contrast with the traditional, vernacular character of the listed property. Whilst the proposed design seeks to ensure that the extension appears visually permeable, allowing glimpsed views of the older fabric beyond, this would in all likelihood be largely negated by the furniture and other domestic paraphernalia which would be located within the new room.
12. Although there would be no loss of original fabric, I am particularly concerned with the harm which the proposed development and works would cause to the catslide roof. The bold, geometric and hard form of the extension would cut into the long sweeping catslide roof and, together with the employment of vast expanses of glazing and a flat roof, would harmfully contrast with the softer, rounder shape which defines the cottage. The proposed extension would result in an incongruous form of development, which would fail to assimilate with the older fabric and respect the vernacular character of the cottage. Consequently, the new addition would cause unacceptable harm to the historic integrity and aesthetic value of the cottage, to the detriment of its significance. The retention of a small part of the structure and section of the catslide roof would not in my view be sufficient to outweigh the identified harm.

Dormer window to South-East elevation

13. The proposed dormer window to the South-East elevation of the property would require the removal of a small section of thatch and supporting roof structure, as well as the loss of part of the stretcher bond brickwork from a later extension to the original cottage, which may date from the 19th century. The proposed window would interrupt the plain and sweeping nature of the thatched roof and result in the introduction of a new opening to the side elevation where it appears that, having regard to the available evidence, none previously existed.
14. The formation of an additional opening would detract from the vernacular character of the property, particularly as windows on the flank elevations of such properties are traditionally more unusual and small in size. The proposed dormer would thus fail to preserve the special interest and significance of the listed building. There would be a small loss of historic fabric in creating the proposed opening which, for the reasons detailed above, would also be unjustified.
15. Although there are examples of listed properties with dormer windows locally, I understand that these particular features are reflected within the relevant listing descriptions and, as such, contribute to the significance of these

particular designated heritage assets. Examples of historic dormers do not provide justification for the proposed dormer which, for the reasons given above, would cause harm to the significance of Roumain Cottage.

Relocation of oil tank

16. The oil tank, which is presently sited to the rear of Roumain Cottage, is proposed to be relocated slightly further away from the listed building and formally enclosed by white painted blockwork. A fire door would be installed on the northern side of the enclosure. In its current position, the oil tank appears relatively unobtrusive as it sits against the site's boundary hedge.
17. The relocation of the oil tank further away from the listed building would certainly improve its setting, but I share the Council's concerns in respect of the proposed enclosure. Whilst it would screen the oil tank, the proposed enclosure would, by reason of its solid construction and white finish, attract undue attention to the structure and increase its prominence within the site, to the extent that it would have a harmful effect on the setting of Roumain Cottage.
18. The appellant has explained that the relocation of the oil tank is required in order to accommodate the proposed extension and for fire safety reasons. However, I have found that the new extension would cause harm to the listed building, and limited evidence has been presented to substantiate the relocation on fire safety grounds. The relocation and enclosure of the oil tank would need to be achieved in a manner which would not cause greater harm to its setting than as per the current situation. This would not be satisfactorily addressed by the appellant's suggestion that the enclosure could be rendered or buried.

Appeal C – Replacement windows and dormer window to North-West elevation

19. The appellant is also seeking listed building consent for the replacement of three ground floor single-glazed windows to the South-East (kitchen and drawing room) and North-West (drawing room) elevations with 'slimline' double-glazing. The windows which are proposed to be replaced are not in themselves of particular special architectural or historic interest, but they are single glazed, and their modestly detailed design is appropriate to the simple vernacular character of the cottage.
20. As shown on the submitted plans, the detailing of the proposed openings would include glazing bars matching those of other replacement windows approved as part of previous applications¹. However, the proposed glazing would inevitably be thicker than a single pane of glass. Additionally, the reflective properties of the new openings would clearly identify them as modern double glazed units, and not historically accurate replacements for the existing windows.
21. The tripartite size and shape of the existing first floor window sited to the side (North-West) elevation of the cottage presently appears at odds with the property's vernacular character, and the appellant therefore seeks to replace it with a thatched dormer, which would house a four-light breakthrough window. The proposal intends to replicate the style of other dormer windows found in the local area, specifically along Station Road and Heathman Road.

¹ Local Planning Authority References 19/02285/FULLN and 19/02286/LBWN.

22. Although the replacement of the existing window is not objected to, it would require the loss of part of the thatch and roof timbers, which may date from the 19th century. The affected thatch and timbers may not constitute original fabric, but it does not follow that this part of the appeal property is without architectural merit and does not contribute to the significance of the listed building.
23. As noted above, the imposing appearance of the thatched roof, as supported by the timbers, makes an important contribution to the building's aesthetic significance and special interest. Whilst it would replace the existing tripartite window, the proposed dormer would look more prominent and inevitably disrupt the otherwise largely unbroken and sweeping thatched roofscape of the cottage. It would appear as an intrusive addition, which would result in the loss, albeit limited, of historic roof timbers and base layers of the thatch.
24. The identified harm would be exacerbated by the extent of the proposed glazing. Whilst the proposed window would cover a smaller area on the wall than the existing, it would nevertheless, by reason of its position, still appear at odds with the more restrained pattern of fenestration which is normally found on the flank elevations of vernacular cottages. As a result, the proposed dormer, which would be visible in publicly available views, would be detrimental to the building's significance.
25. Some aspects of the proposals would not be widely visible within the public realm, as any views from the public right of way situated to the rear of the appeal site are to a large extent screened by existing landscaping. Nevertheless, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained. I therefore afford very limited weight to this consideration.
26. For the foregoing reasons, the proposed development and works would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, including its setting. The appeal proposal would therefore not accord with Policy E9 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan² which, amongst other things, permits development that would make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing the significance of the heritage asset taking account of its character, appearance and setting. The proposed development and works would also be contrary to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), and section 66 of the Act.

Other Matters

27. As mentioned previously, the appeal property lies within the Nether, Over and Middle Wallop Conservation Area. No concerns have been raised by the Council in respect of the effect of the proposals on this designated heritage asset. Roumain Cottage is well set back from the road, and the proposed alterations would affect the side and rear elevations of the property, which would to some extent be screened by existing landscaping. Accordingly, and having regard to the available evidence, I am satisfied that the proposed development and works would preserve the character and appearance of the Nether, Over and Middle Wallop Conservation Area.

² Adopted in January 2016.

28. Planning permission and listed building consent were notably refused by reason of the Council's concerns regarding the effect of the proposed development and works on bats. In addition to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal which was submitted in support of the planning application, the appellant provided further information in relation to potential impacts to protected species. As part of their submissions, the Council have confirmed that the concerns raised previously by the Ecologist have been satisfactorily addressed by the additional information provided by the appellant. Having regard to the available evidence, I agree that there is no reasonable likelihood of bats being present within the appeal property.

Planning Balance

29. The appeal scheme would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the Grade II listed building. Nevertheless, the Framework³ clearly states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. In such circumstances, the identified harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
30. The installation of double glazed windows would allow for the existing aluminium secondary glazing to be removed, and it is argued that the proposal would improve the thermal efficiency of the property. It is also advanced that the proposed development and works would enhance the living conditions of existing and future occupiers of the property. These would constitute private benefits and may also be reasonably regarded as modest public benefits, insofar as they could help securing the future of the appeal property as a designated heritage asset.
31. However, there is limited information before me which suggests that the proposed improvements could not be achieved by other means. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I find no reasons to believe that the continued occupation of the listed property is dependent on the proposed developments and works. For each appeal, the harm identified would not be outweighed by the presented public benefits, including, securing its optimum viable use.

Conclusion

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

S Edwards

INSPECTOR

³ Paragraph 193.