
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 19 August 2020

by Mr JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2020

Appeal A: APP/F1610/W/20/3251769 **Wykeham House, Winson GL7 5ES**

- 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 Lankendra Chandresinghe against the decision of Cotswold District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/04162/FUL, dated 8 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is to raise the height of the garage roof, replacement chimney, new windows and alterations to existing doors and windows.
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Appeal B: APP/F1610/Y/20/3251768 **Wykeham House, Winson GL7 5ES**

- 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 Lankendra Chandresinghe against the decision of Cotswold District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/04163/LBC, dated 8 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 18 March 2020.
 - The works proposed are to raise the height of the garage roof, replacement chimney, new windows and alterations to existing doors and windows.
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Decisions

Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed

Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed

Procedural matters

3. I have noted the addresses and descriptions given on the application forms. However, I have used the shorter more succinct versions found on the decision notices, as I consider they identify the site and the works more accurately and appropriately. To my mind no one has been prejudiced as a result.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of this listed building, whether they would harm the character or appearance of the Winson Conservation Area, and their effect on the significance of these 2 designated heritage assets.

Reasons

5. The Grade II listed Wykeham House was formerly an agricultural barn that dates from the early 19th Century, with what was a stable block adjoining at right angles. Although subject to appreciable change as part of its recent conversion to living accommodation, it still maintains much of its historic character through its external appearance, its form, and the nature of its openings. Such factors not only add to the special architectural and historic interest of the building but contribute to its significance.
6. At the building's southern end, an addition from at least the late 19th Century, referred to as a garage, sits against the gable of the barn. Although more recent, it nonetheless has a sympathetic appearance, and is clearly a subservient element in the composition that enhances and respects the organic evolution of this cluster of agricultural buildings. In this regard the garage element contributes positively to the significance of the building and adds to its special architectural and historic interest
7. Aspects of the roof structure of the garage are visible within the first-floor bathroom in its roofspace. The appellant has contended that this structure is modern. In contrast, the Council maintains it is historic fabric. Little conclusive evidence either way has been forthcoming. However, from my observations on site the purlins that are now visible in the bathroom appear to be of some age, and are markedly different to how alterations to roof timberwork had been otherwise treated in the recent conversion. Moreover, the structural report confirms the roof is failing at the moment, and that is in a way and to a degree that would not be expected if its structure was modern. Therefore, on the evidence before me I consider the roof structure above the garage to be historic, even if it has been re-covered, and it helps understand the building by demonstrating its simple construction method. As such, it too contributes to the significance of the building and to its special architectural and historic interest.
8. Turning to the intended works, internally, the concrete floor in the main building is to be lowered. This is a modern intrusion and I am told it can be taken away without any adverse effect on the building's structure or a need for underpinning. As such, I find its removal acceptable. The first floor level inserted in the main barn is also to be reduced, and this would better open up that element of the building.
9. With regard to the garage, even if the roof was raised as proposed, this element would still be appreciably lower than the gable to which it was attached, and so its subservient relationship with the main building and the complex would not be harmed. However, these works would result in significant changes to the roof structure. As I have found it contributes to the significance of the building then losing this fabric and replacing it would result in less than substantial harm to this significance.
10. The works also involve introducing new openings or altering existing ones on the south elevation of the former stables and the east elevation of the former barn. On the stables this mainly involves enlarging existing rooflights. Mindful that rooflights are now present in or near these locations what is proposed would not be unduly large or discordant if they were detailed suitably.

11. On the barn I raise no objections to the lowering of the largest window as that would once again allude to the sizeable barn door there beforehand. The window to the kitchen is to be lowered but, while this may cause a loss of some fabric, I am not satisfied that, if made good appropriately, it would harm the building's significance.
12. However, the window to what is described as the master bedroom would be changed to have a prominent, elongated, horizontal form, yet at the same time would also be quite deep, resulting in a sizeable first floor window. This would be unduly domestic in nature, and so appreciably at odds with the pattern of window treatment expected on an older agricultural building. As such, it would diminish its historic character and would harm its significance.
13. The various other new openings and the alterations to existing openings would be sympathetic in nature and scale, and would not undermine the building's character.
14. Turning to the conservation area, the significance of this lies partly in it encompassing a historic rural village. This is reflected in its character and appearance, with many properties apparently built in traditional methods out of materials common to the area, and numerous buildings being of a design and form that, despite their subsequent conversion to residential use, illustrate their agricultural origins. As it is still readily apparent as a former barn from the early 19th Century, Wykeham House contributes positively to this significance.
15. Harm would not be caused to the more public west and north elevations of the building. However, because the window to the master bedroom would diminish the building's historic value, I also consider it would harm the significance of conservation area. I accept that these works could not be readily seen from the public domain, but they would be visible from neighbouring properties.
16. In assessing these elements I appreciate that the building has been substantially altered, and in some ways that are less sympathetic to its historic character. However, the parties accepted the building was still appreciable as a heritage asset, and I consider the previous works have not undermined the building's significance or its special architectural or historic interest sufficiently to mean what is now proposed would not be harmful.
17. Accordingly, I consider alterations to the master bedroom window would cause harm, albeit less than substantial, to the significance of the listed building and the conservation area. Moreover, given I have come to the view that the roof structure over the garage is historic, less than substantial harm would also be caused by its loss. Under the *National Planning Policy Framework*, this harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme.
18. The appellant has said that the works are necessary to make the vacant property saleable, so stopping its deterioration and bring it back into active use. Putting aside the fact that it was furnished and occupied when I visited, I am unclear as to how the works would help in this regard or the positive impact they would have on the building's attractiveness to purchasers. Lowering the floor would still require some steps (albeit fewer) to be negotiated while the rooms I went into did not seem unduly dark and in need of larger windows despite it being a heavily overcast day. Moreover, I consider the existing bathroom over the garage is not particularly small and seems well furnished with all one would expect, and so I afford little weight to the benefit of the

intended roof alterations. I am also aware that responding to the heritage demands of a listed building often mean the nature of the accommodation is affected.

19. With regard to other potential benefits, I do not question that the garage roof needs attention, but that in itself does not necessarily justify the works now proposed. I recognise that the reducing the extent of the first floor better opens up the barn internally, while lowering the main window on the east elevation would reflect the large door there originally, but I see no reason why such works necessitate the harmful elements identified. Other aspects of the works do not cause harm, but to my mind their effect on the special architectural and historic interest of the building is neutral. Therefore, what else is proposed to the dwelling, in heritage terms, does not weigh appreciably in favour of the scheme. Finally, biodiversity benefits have also been offered but their value, even if they could be secured, would not outweigh the harm I have found.

Other matters

20. Given the scale of the works and mindful the site is within a village, they would not fail to conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. I also find they would not cause problems of overlooking given the distances, the angles involved and the current relationship between Wykeham House and its neighbours.

Conclusions

21. Accordingly, I conclude the enlarged window to the master bedroom and the loss of the historic roof structure over the garage would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the listed building and would cause less than substantial harm to its significance as a designated heritage asset.
22. I also conclude the bedroom window would not preserve the character or appearance of the conservation area and would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of that designated heritage asset as well.
23. I consider no public benefits outweigh the less than substantial harm caused to the significance of these assets by these elements. As a result, the scheme is contrary to Policies EN2, EN10 and EN11 in the *Cotswold District Local Plan*, which all broadly seek good design that sustains and enhances the heritage environment, and the *National Planning Policy Framework*.
24. In coming to this conclusion, I am aware that the appellant considers the roof structure over the garage is not historic. Even if he is correct, the less than substantial harm caused by the proposed bedroom window would still not be outweighed by the public benefits identified.
25. Accordingly, the appeals should be dismissed.

JP Sargent

INSPECTOR