
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 August 2020

by AJ Steen BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14th October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/Y/20/3245800

Box Tree, Dean Lane, Merstham RH1 3AH

- 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 Pete Allibone against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00962/LBC, dated 12 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2019.
 - The works proposed are the change of colour of the wooden window frames, door frames and front door.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In determining this appeal involving a listed building I have had regard to section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
3. The Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan (DMP) was adopted in September 2019 and is now part of the development plan for this appeal. A copy of the relevant policy was supplied with the Questionnaire. This replaced the previous Local Plan and I have made my decision on this basis.

Main Issue

4. Whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building known as Box Tree or its setting or any features of special architectural and historic interest (or significance) which it possesses.

Reasons

5. Box Tree comprises half of a former barn that is constructed in flint with brick quoins, panels and window dressings and with timber windows and doors. The barn has been converted into two houses such that the two houses are broadly symmetrical, with matching windows and doors. The windows of both dwellings are painted a dark brown, with the front door of Box Tree painted light grey. The dark brown colour makes the windows appear as timber from a distance, rather than being obviously painted, which reflects the historic agricultural use of the building.

6. The significance of the listed building is in its historic fabric, its simple form as a flint building with brick quoins, panels and window dressings and its value within a group of grade II listed buildings also comprising the adjacent farmhouse and stables. It has been converted into two homes in a way that has preserved those elements and its agricultural character. This includes the position, size, orientation and detailed design of the windows. These are painted in a similar, muted colour on both dwellings and preserve the building's agricultural character.
7. The change of colour of the doors and windows would alter the external appearance of Box Tree. The grey colour reflects the colour of other materials on the building. Nevertheless, it would differentiate this house from the attached neighbour and would result in these windows appearing more prominent on the building. All of this would make the listed building more domestic in appearance as two separate dwellings and erode its agricultural character. Consequently, the change in colour of the windows and doors of Box Tree would affect the significance of the building as a heritage asset.
8. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed works would not preserve features of special architectural and historic interest on the listed building. It would not preserve the listed building and would harm its significance as a heritage asset. Consequently, it would be contrary to Policy NHE9 of the DMP and paragraphs 189-194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that seek to protect, preserve, and wherever possible enhance heritage assets, such as listed buildings, including that works should be sympathetic to heritage assets through the use of appropriate high quality materials, design and detailing.
9. The harm identified would be less than substantial. Nevertheless, and in accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework, this is a matter to which I accord considerable importance and weight. No public benefit has been drawn to my attention, apart from the maintenance of the listed building. That benefit is minimal and cannot outweigh the identified harm to the listed building.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

AJ Steen

INSPECTOR