



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 November 2020

by Nigel Harrison BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date:

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2810/Y/20/3257294

East View, Stockwell Lane, Hellidon, NN11 6LG

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Alexis Russell against Daventry District Council.
 - The application Ref: DA/2020/0324 is dated 22 April 2020.
 - The works proposed are: "Relay the rear slope of the roof, includes original house and extension."
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for "relay the rear slope of the roof, includes original house and extension" at East View, Stockwell Lane, Hellidon, NN11 6LG in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: DA/2020/0324 dated 22 April 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) The proposed re-roofing works and associated repairs to chimney and gable abutments and rainwater goods shall be carried out in accordance with the schedule of works set out in the Design and Access Statement, with all details to match the existing as shown in the photographs submitted and made valid with the application on 5 May 2020.
 - 3) The source and properties of the new slates to be used to cover the rear roof slopes shall match the sample of natural Spanish dark slate that was submitted with the application, shown as sample # 1 on the photograph submitted and made valid with the application and inspected on site on 22 May 2020.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the works on the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building and its setting, and on the character and appearance of the Hellidon Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. East View is one of a pair of Grade II listed buildings of 18th century origin of local ironstone construction and with a slate roof. It is located within the Hellidon Conservation Area. The existing roof has been in place since the early 1990s when the property was renovated, and the extension added. The rear

roof slope suffers from extensive exposure to the weather and is affected by the proximity of large trees. It is proposed to strip the existing slates and battens and re-cover with new slates. As set out in the accompanying Design and Access Statement the works also include making associated repairs to the chimney, gable abutments, flashings and rainwater goods at the same time.

4. At the Statutory level 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, and for special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
5. Paragraph 193 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) says when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss, or less than substantial harm to its significance. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 196 says where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
6. I have been referred to Policy BN5 of the *West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy*, adopted December 2015 (JCS), and Objective 14 and Policy ENV7 of the *Settlements & Countryside Local Plan (Part 2 Local Plan) for Daventry District 2011-2029*, adopted February 2020 (LP). These policies reflect the statutory duty and the provisions of the Framework and may be taken into account as a material consideration in an application for listed building consent.
7. The Hellidon Village Design Statement sets out planning and design guidelines that area intended to protect and strengthen the traditional qualities of Hellidon. One of its 'general development guidelines' is that 'the design and use of materials used in any extension or alteration should be at least equal to or better than that of the main structure.
8. The significance of East View derives from its age, vernacular appearance, and the positive contribution it makes to the attractive character of the village. An important part of the significance of the Conservation Area is the widespread use of local ironstone and traditional roofing materials such as slate on houses and outbuildings within the village.
9. The Council has no objection to the principle of stripping and re-laying the roof, but suggests that this could either be achieved by re-using as many of the existing slates as possible and making up the shortfall with new matching ones, or use new or good quality reclaimed slates throughout. However, I agree with the appellant that repair and patching would be an unsatisfactory and piecemeal approach which would only delay the likely replacement of the entire roof at some point.
10. The appellant put forward a Spanish slate, being satisfied that a sufficient supply of the correct size and thickness could be sourced to cover the entire roof. However, the case officer expressed concerns about the colour, texture and finish of the sample and returned to the site with a selection of other slates including a 'heather' Welsh slate and other samples including a Brazilian grey slate and another lighter coloured slate sourced by the appellant. These were

laid out on the roof to allow comparison with the *in-situ* slates and with each other, and were made available for inspection at my site visit.

11. What is evident to me is that it is very difficult to secure an exact match with the existing slates, particularly given the amount of weathering which has occurred, and even more difficult to reproduce the existing 'pepper pot' appearance arising from the existing mix of two different slate types. Clearly the appearance of the roofs of East View and Bank View Cottage have evolved over time, and both properties have been greatly extended in modern times.
12. Whilst natural Welsh slate remains prevalent on traditional slate-roofed buildings in the District, its use is not exclusive, and the Council says it is not prescriptive in insisting on its use in all roofing projects involving listed buildings, adding that that in many cases alternatives have been accepted.
13. Overall, I favour a pragmatic approach. Notwithstanding its slightly darker colour and heavier texture, I am satisfied that the Spanish slate sample (#1 in the submitted photographs) would be an acceptable match and would not harm the significance of the listed building or the conservation area.
14. I accept that there would be some contrast with the existing slates on the rear slope of Bank Cottage. However, I do not consider this to be necessarily harmful, particularly given the changing appearance of the roofs over time relative to each other. In any event, both roof slopes are in different planes, and whilst the slates on the southern section of Bank Cottage are consistent in colouring, those on the rear roof slope are not. Furthermore, when listed, Bank Cottage had a corrugated iron roof which would have contrasted markedly from that of its neighbour.

Conclusion on the main issues

15. Taking into account all the above, I conclude on balance that the proposed re-roofing with natural Spanish slate (sample #1), and associated works, would have a neutral effect that would not materially harm the significance of the Grade II listed building and its setting. For the same reasons it would preserve the character and appearance of the Hellidon Conservation Area, causing no harm to the significance of these heritage assets. Therefore, the question of public benefits to outweigh any harm does not arise. As such, the works would be in accordance with the Act. Nor would the proposal conflict with JCS Policy BN5, LP Objective 4, and LP Policy ENV7, insofar as they are material considerations.

Conditions

16. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council in the light of the advice in the *Government's Planning Practice Guidance*. Conditions are needed to ensure that the works are carried out in accordance with the approved details, for the avoidance of doubt and to safeguard the special architectural and historic interest of the building.

Overall Conclusion

17. Therefore, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Nigel Harrison INSPECTOR