



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2020

by S Edwards MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/Y/20/3259552

Ragmoor Farm House, Basingstoke Road, Heckfield, Hook RG27 0LJ

- 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 Andrew Speed (Wellington Resettled Estate) against Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01590/LBC is dated 7 July 2020.
 - The works proposed are described as 'Proposed works to achieve HMO requirements as a shared house: Works to doors to restore their appearance and also provide more assured fire protection. Internal alterations to improve the means of escape and identify a clearer fire exit strategy. Reinstating front and rear entrance doors to match the historic doors. Provision of a new fire exit door to the rear in the place of a former door'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and listed building consent is granted for 'Proposed works to achieve HMO requirements as a shared house: Works to doors to restore their appearance and also provide more assured fire protection. Internal alterations to improve the means of escape and identify a clearer fire exit strategy. Reinstating front and rear entrance doors to match the historic doors. Provision of a new fire exit door to the rear in the place of a former door' at Ragmoor Farm House, Basingstoke Road, Heckfield, Hood RG27 0LJ, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 20/01590/LBC dated 7 July 2020 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the attached schedule of conditions.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposed works affect a listed building, and I have therefore had special regard to section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
3. The appeal was made against the Council's failure to give notice, within the prescribed timescales, of a decision on an application for listed building consent. However, the Council have confirmed within their submissions that, had it been in a position to determine the application, listed building consent would have been refused.
4. The Council has indicated that whilst listed building consent has previously been granted for the retention of a wall in the bathroom area, this did not apply to the retention of the sanitary ware or pipework to service this room. In the interests of clarity, my decision only relates to the works for which listed building consent was sought as part of the application subject to this appeal.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building known as Ragmoor Farmhouse.

Reasons

6. Located within an area of rural character, Ragmoor Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building dating from the 17th century, which was constructed as a cottage associated with the Wellington Estate. The property has subsequently been subject to a number of alterations and was converted to two or three units. In more recent times, the premises have been used as a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) for pupils/apprentices working at Wellington Riding equestrian centre.
7. Internally, the original layout of the property appears to have been much altered. That said, and despite a number of additions over time, the appeal building retains much of its historic fabric, including its red tile roof with three gable features to the principal elevation flanked by prominent chimney stacks, red brick walling in Flemish bond, as well as a timber-framed gable to the wing. There is no doubt that the significance of this designated heritage asset primarily derives from its architectural interest due to its charming vernacular character and traditional construction, but also from its historic interest, by reason of its association with Wellington Estate.
8. The absence of satisfactory fire protection measures currently limits the occupation of the listed building as an HMO, which some of the proposed works seek to remedy. The Council considers that insufficient information has been submitted in order to ascertain the effect of the proposed works on the significance of the Grade II listed building. However, the appellant's submissions, having regard to the Design, Access and Heritage Statement in particular, include a fairly detailed account of the internal and external works, for which listed building consent is being sought. I am therefore satisfied that the level of information provided is sufficient to enable the decision-maker to assess the effect of the proposed works on the significance of the listed building.
9. The appeal scheme includes the replacement of the existing steel doors to the front and rear of the listed farmhouse, which have been previously fitted without the benefit of listed building consent. Due to their utilitarian appearance, they presently detract from the significance of the appeal building. The appellant has been unable to retrieve the original doors and is therefore proposing to replace the existing doors with traditional framed and ledged timber doors. These would be of a similar appearance to the historic doors, and would be more sympathetic to the historic character of the appeal building.
10. The external works also include the replacement of an existing bathroom window with a timber door to provide an additional exit to the rear of the house. The brickwork beneath the existing window appears to be fairly modern, suggesting that the opening has in the past replaced that of a door. The timber lintel above the existing window would be retained, thus ensuring that these works would not lead to the loss of historic fabric. Subject to the imposition of a condition requiring further details to show how the opening would be

constructed, I consider that these works would preserve the significance of the listed building.

11. Furthermore, the appeal scheme is seeking consent for the installation of internal partitions to subdivide the existing bathroom. These partitions would be attached to the floor by legs and to the wall with brackets to minimise any damage to the building's historic fabric. The appellant's submissions indicate that the subdivision would take the form of lightweight partitions, which would not extend fully from floor to ceiling. This would enable the subdivision to proceed in a manner which would not materially disrupt an appreciation of the proportions of the room as it is today. Moreover, due to the manner in which the proposed partitions would attach to the floor and walls, the intervention would be reversible over time, with minimal harm to historic fabric. Notwithstanding this, some clarity is considered necessary regarding details of the proposed partitions, which can be secured by a suitably worded condition.
12. The works to the internal doors which are required to improve the property's resilience in the event of a fire and thus protect its occupiers are also sufficiently detailed. Consequently, I am satisfied that, having regard to the available information, these works would not adversely affect the building's historic fabric.
13. The proposed works would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of Ragmoor Farmhouse. Accordingly, I find no conflict with Saved Policy GEN1 of the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006¹, Policies NBE8 and NBE9 of the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032² and Section 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These notably seek to ensure that development proposals conserve or enhance heritage assets and their settings.

Conditions

14. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council, making minor amendments where necessary, to ensure compliance with the tests as set out within paragraph 55 of the Framework and the National Planning Practice Guidance³. The appellant has confirmed his agreement to pre-commencement conditions.
15. In addition to the standard time limit, I shall impose conditions specifying the relevant drawings which the works must accord with, in the interests of certainty and to provide clarity. Conditions seeking further details of the proposed opening and internal partitions are required to preserve the architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is allowed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR

¹ Adopted in 2002.

² Adopted in April 2020.

³ Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 21a-003-20190723.

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The works hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The works hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following: Location Plan, Ground Floor Fire Planning (FS.01 Rev C), First Floor Plan Fire Strategy (FS.02 Rev D), Proposed works including works as approved under 19/01885/LBC (LB.10), Replacement door details (5M.01 Rev A), New exit door details (5M.01 Rev A), New internal door details (5M.03).
- 3) Notwithstanding Condition 2 above, the works hereby permitted shall not commence until further details of the proposed opening to the west elevation have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include a proposed section of the west elevation at 1:10 scale showing the internal and external construction of the door, as well as details of modifications to the existing opening and shall clearly show the nature and relationship of new and retained/modified elements of construction. The works shall be carried out and thereafter maintained in accordance with the details so approved.
- 4) The subdivision of the bathroom hereby permitted shall not commence until details of the partitioning have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These shall include drawings at a scale of 1:20 showing the relationship of the partition walls and floor and fixing mechanism, as well as details of the materials and finish. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and retained as such thereafter.

END OF SCHEDULE