



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 February 2021

by Neil Pope BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/Y/20/3261939

West Farm Stables, Kit Lane, Owermoigne, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8HP.

- 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 Mike Morris against the decision of Dorset Council.
 - The application Ref. WD/D/20/001050, dated 4 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 14 October 2020.
 - The works proposed are cladding of a wall, using natural slate, to match the roof, to prevent ingress of rainwater.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for the cladding of a wall, using natural slate, to match the roof, to prevent ingress of rainwater at West Farm Stables, Kit Lane, Owermoigne, Dorchester, Dorset, DT2 8HP. Consent is granted in accordance with the terms of the application ref. WD/D/20/001050, dated 4 May 2020, subject to the conditions in the Schedule below.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site comprises the south west wall of West Farm Stables¹. This dwelling is attached to the Grade II listed building known as West Farmhouse². It also lies within the Owermoigne Conservation Area³ (CA) and is within the setting of the Grade II* listed Church of St. Michael.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether any harm to the heritage interest (significance) of West Farmhouse, the CA or the Church of St. Michael would be outweighed by any public benefits of the proposal.

Reasons

4. The significance of West Farmhouse, which dates from the 17th century, is primarily derived from its special architectural and historic qualities. These include its coursed rubble stone walls with brick dressings to the windows, clay tile roof, sash windows, brick stacks and its past association with agricultural activities in this part of Dorset. Although much altered and now in residential use, West Farm Stables is a pleasing vernacular building that can still be discerned as a former agricultural building linked to West Farmhouse. It makes a small contribution to the overall significance of this listed building.

¹ Converted into a dwelling during the 1980s, with the insertion of two casement windows in the south west wall.

² The provisions of section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is engaged.

³ The provisions of section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is engaged.

5. The significance of Parish Church of St. Michael is derived primarily from its special architectural and historic qualities. These include its early 15th century three storey west tower, medieval windows, the rebuilding works in the late 19th century to the design of S. Jackson and its past associations with religious worship in this part of Dorset. Its setting has changed over time and includes buildings of various ages and styles within the surrounding streets. West Farmhouse and West Farm Stables wrap around the junction of Kit Lane and Church Lane. These traditional buildings provide a pleasing sense of enclosure to the south west of the church and contribute to an appreciation of the heritage interest of this building which is of more than special interest.
6. The CA covers a sizeable part of the settlement and includes buildings of various sizes and designs, with a rich variety of materials, as well as some open spaces. It appears to me that the significance of this designated heritage asset is derived primarily from the contribution made by the various listed buildings and green spaces. The church tower is a local landmark and local views of this listed building add to the pleasing qualities of the CA. The appeal site appears within a view of the church tower from the south west.
7. The south west wall of West Farm Stables comprises an inner skin of brickwork and an outer skin of local random limestone blocks with some brick quoins. It also has a mix of lime and cement mortar pointing. Notwithstanding various works over the years, including a chemical damp proof course, raking out some of the pointing, replacing some fractured stones, installing guttering over the hipped roof and constructing an internal stud partition, there is a continuing problem with damp penetration through this wall.
8. The appellant, who has owned the building for many years, is a retired civil engineer with knowledge of lime and cement mortars, as well as damp and water transmission in buildings. Having investigated the above problem, he has found that water is not penetrating the building at ground level. Instead, the porosity of the outer wall face allows water to penetrate and become saturated whilst the binding mortar reduces the pathway to the exterior. Capillary action draws water towards the inner face with the cement mortar trapping water in the wall. If unresolved, this is likely to result in damage to the fabric of the building, as well as unsuitable living conditions in this part of the dwelling. It would not be in the public interest to allow this to occur.
9. Various options have been explored by the appellant. A lime render would change the external appearance of the wall. Whilst this is a traditional finish for walls on some Dorset buildings, the existing cement binding/mortar would still be likely to trap water inside the wall during periods of heavy rainfall and moisture would eventually be drawn inside the building. Removing the cement is likely to have a damaging effect on the fabric of the wall.
10. The suggestion of applying timber cladding/weatherboarding would also change the external appearance of the wall. Whilst there is some weatherboarding on a neighbouring modern property, this is not a traditional approach to buildings in this part of the country. Moreover, unless applied to the whole of the face of the wall it is unlikely to be successful in preventing water penetration.
11. The proposed use of vertical slate hanging would also change the external appearance of the wall. This type of wall treatment is commonly found in parts of south west England, although there are no examples in Owermoigne. The use of natural slates to match those used on the roof of the building and

careful attention to the means of affixing these to the wall, including the use of a breathable membrane, would limit the risk of damaging important building fabric. The proposal would not increase the palette of materials on the building and, in all likelihood, would solve the problems with water penetration. Most of these works would also be reversible.

12. The proposed works would not diminish the ability to appreciate or understand the significance of West Farmhouse. The appeal building would still be 'read' as a former ancillary agricultural building to this designated heritage asset. Furthermore, whilst the slate hanging would be apparent from parts of the CA and in the view along Kit Lane towards the church tower, it would not detract from the special qualities of the CA or the heritage interest of the Church of St. Michael. There is no evidence to substantiate the Council's concern that the proposal would harm the setting of this Grade II* listed building. Even if the change to the appearance of West Farm Stables was adverse, the scale of this would be so small that it would be outweighed by the public benefit of preventing water penetration. There would be no conflict with the aims and objectives of policy ENV4 of the development plan⁴.
13. In addition to the 'standard' condition requiring works to commence within a period of three years, in the interests of certainty a condition would be necessary specifying the approved plans. To limit the impact of the proposed works, conditions would be necessary requiring the natural slates to match those used on the roof, as well as further details of the means of affixing these to the building and other associated works not shown on the approved plans.
14. Given all of the above, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Neil Pope

Inspector

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

1. The works hereby permitted shall commence within a period of three years from the date of this decision.
2. The works hereby permitted shall be undertaken in accordance with the following approved plans: 1:500 scale site plan; 1:50 scale stage 1 works – installation of reveals (drawing ref. AN 995/11); 1:50 scale stage 2 works – installation of vertical slate (drawing ref. AN 995/12).
3. The natural slates to be used shall match the existing natural slates on the roof of the building.
4. No works shall commence until details of all of the following have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority: the means of affixing the natural slates to the building, including supporting batten work, the membrane type and edge batten finishes; any associated works to the roof eaves line or guttering; the lead flashings to be used and; any graduation pattern in the slate hanging. The works shall be undertaken in accordance with the approved details.

⁴ The provisions of section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 are not engaged.