



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2021

by H Porter BA(Hons) MSc Dip IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/Y/20/3260905

The Clock House, Brockhampton Mews, Bringsty WR6 5TB

- 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 & Mrs Kel Walker against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
 - The application Ref 201384, dated 5 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2020.
 - The works proposed are installation of two Heritage style rooflights into the south facing roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. Upon comparing the submitted plans with the appeal building as I saw it during my site visit, discrepancies in the drafting of the existing and proposed plans became apparent. Notably, the submitted plans did not show the appeal site and proposed works in relation to it, but the adjacent property. The main parties were notified, and the appellants given the opportunity to submit correct plans. The Council did not object to this approach, and I am satisfied that no parties' interests would be prejudiced in my considering the appeal on the basis of the revised drawings that were submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 15 March 2021.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed works on the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building known as Stables North West of Brockhampton Park, and on the setting of the Grade II* listed building known as Brockhampton Park.

Reasons

4. The appeal property comprises part of the Grade II listed former stables, identified in the statutory list description as 'an 18th century stables of painted brick featuring two-light stone mullion windows and a central clock tower with cupola with ranges at the rear forming an enclosed yard' (List Entry Number 1082375). The former stables were historically ancillary to the mid-18th century red brick mansion Brockhampton Park, a separately Grade II* listed building

(List Entry Number 1176659). I am mindful of my statutory duties in respect of both listed buildings, and their settings.

5. From the evidence available to me, I consider that the significance and special interest of the former stables is drawn from its former use and intrinsic historic connection with Brockhampton Park. The building's carefully balanced composition and architectural form, including its overhanging roof, central clocktower cupola feature and symmetry, is also of special interest. In particular, the building's south-facing roof emphasises a strong degree of symmetry, wherein the extant dormers and an equal expanse of unbroken tiled roof slope provide an overall balance on either side of the central clocktower feature. Therefore, the symmetry that has been maintained within the building's southern roof slope contributes to its overall integrity, architectural interest and significance.
6. The significance and special interest of Brockhampton Park is underpinned in part by its age, architectural form, historic fabric and historic associations. Significance is also derived from it being the principal structure within a wider estate comprised of land and a complex of ancillary structures, which the former stables formed a part. Albeit now in residential use, the former stable complex continues to reflect the characteristics of an ancillary stable block and an historic association with Brockhampton Park. Thus, the stables are part of the setting of Brockhampton Park and contribute to its historic interest and significance.
7. The former stables and associated structures around its yard were subject to subdivision and residential conversion in the late 20th century. The clocktower range now comprises four cottages, with the appeal site being to the east of the central clocktower. The south-facing elevation of the appeal site, and the dwelling on the other (west) side of the central cupola clocktower, feature a small dormer window approximately mid-way along the otherwise unbroken expanse of grey slates. Owing to their symmetrical positioning, one to the east and one to the west of the central feature, these two dormer windows accentuate the overall sense of balance and symmetry within the building's southern elevation.
8. The proposal is to insert two 'conservation-style' rooflights into the appeal site's south-facing roof slope. The new rooflights would be arranged symmetrically in relation to the extant the dormer window, be the same height and equally spaced. However, the proposal would affect one side of the roof slope only, introducing two new windows that would not be matched on the building's western side. As a consequence, the proposed works would undermine the balanced and symmetrical appearance that is currently present across the roofscape as a whole. Even if the internal plasterwork is modern, and the works would involve minimal or no disruption to rafters or purlins, the integrity of the building's careful composition and architectural form would be weakened.
9. I note there has been support for the proposal from the Council's Historic Building's Officer and the National Trust. However, the decision maker is required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The proposed works would not satisfy this duty; rather, the special

architectural interest of the Grade II listed former stables would not be preserved and would, albeit in a small yet appreciable way, be harmed.

10. The proposal would not, in my judgement, erode the legibility of the appeal site and former stable as being historically ancillary to Brockhampton Park. The setting of the Grade II* listed building would therefore be preserved. This does not alter the harm I have found in respect of the Grade II listed former stables.
11. Given the extent and nature of the works proposed in relation to the Grade II listed building as a whole, the degree of harm to its significance would be less than substantial, and towards the lower end of that scale. In the circumstances, paragraph 196 of the Framework¹ requires the harm be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum viable use of the building.
12. The proposed rooflights would provide natural light and ventilation to the master bedroom en-suite and main bathroom of the appeal site. Be that as it may, it has not been convincingly demonstrated that the proposal would be the least harmful way to achieve better energy consumption or improve the health of the building. Rather, the improving natural light and ventilation within the appeal site would be to the private benefit of the appellants. The heritage asset appeared to be in a sound condition and in use as a dwelling, the proposed works would therefore not hold any benefits in securing the building's optimum viable use. Even accounting for modest economic benefits associated with the construction phase, cumulatively the sum of public benefits would not outweigh the considerable importance and weight that even less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset carries.
13. In light of the foregoing, the proposed works would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building known as Stables North West of Brockhampton Park. Conflict therefore arises with the design, historic environment and heritage asset policies within the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011 – 2031, adopted October 2015. Notably Policies SD1 and LD4, which seek to protect, conserve, and where possible enhance heritage assets; and ensure distinctive features of existing buildings are safeguarded. So too would there be conflict with the historic environment protection policies within the Framework.

Conclusion

14. The proposed works would run contrary to the expectations of Section 16(2) or 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, the development plan and the Framework. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Porter

INSPECTOR

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, Revised February 2019 (the Framework)