
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2022

by J Ayres BA Hons, Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/Y/21/3277339

1 Church Cottages, Longstock, Hampshire SO20 6QW

- 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 Caroline Ashenden against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00249/LBWN, dated 26 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2021.
 - The works proposed are remove existing timber windows to original building and rear extension and replace with new slimline double glazed Hampshire casement windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. Planning permission for works to the property including internal alterations, changes to windows and the installation of a dormer window were granted in December 2020. This permission did not include the windows subject to the appeal before me.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building (known as 1 Church Cottages), and whether the proposal preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Longstock Conservation Area (the Conservation Area).

Reasons

4. Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) prescribes a duty upon a decision maker to give special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Additionally, Section 72(1) of the Act seeks that in relation to Conservation Areas special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.
5. 1 Church Cottages (list entry number 140227) is one of a pair of cottages, dating from the 17th century with a later 18th century addition. It is part timber framed with a thatched roof, nestled within the linear grain of development through the village. The windows in the cottage appear to have been replaced

historically, and there is a mixture of styles throughout the building including small multi paned casements and Hampshire style casements. Whilst the windows are unlikely to be original, they are of a suitable material, design and constructional technique which is authentic and characteristic of the modest cottage which remains an attractive, historic dwelling typical of the local vernacular. The significance and special interest of the dwelling is found in the history of its development, surviving traditional materials, detailing and construction, in addition to its setting within the village.

6. Throughout the Conservation Area this mixture of window detailing is evident, with several of the properties showing a variation in window styles. The Conservation Area itself is characterised by its mix of buildings, a number of which were built or converted for use as fishing lodges to benefit from fishing in the river Test to the east. The village would also be closely linked to farming the arable land to the west, and has a history dating back to the Neolithic age.
7. The proposal would replace all remaining windows, being mindful that some replacement windows have been permitted in accordance with the planning permission referred to in my preliminary matter, with Hampshire casement windows. This would create a regimented style across the entire cottage. Whilst it may be the case that this style would reflect the original style of the windows in the cottage, it would involve significantly altering the character of the cottage as it has evolved and currently exists. The cottage does not exhibit a sense of uniformity, its elevations show a mixed pallet of materials and textures which creates an interesting and natural building, and its windows enhance that character. I consider that to remove the existing windows and insert a systematic design would undermine the special interest of the cottage, and result in a harmful loss of historic fabric.
8. I agree with the Appellant that Hampshire casement windows are found throughout the Conservation Area. However, this style is seen as one of a number of window styles, reinforcing the varied character. By systematically replacing the mixture of styles with an increasing number of Hampshire casement windows the varied character of the Conservation Area and the individual buildings is eroded, leaving behind a sense of uniformity that would be more akin to a modern housing development. Accordingly the character and appearance of the Conservation Area as a whole would be harmed by the proposal.
9. Overall, I find that the placement of windows in the style proposed would fail to preserve the architectural and historic interest of the dwelling; and would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, as required by Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Act. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also requires that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to their significance.
10. Although serious, the harm to the heritage asset in this case would be 'less than substantial,' within the meaning of the term in paragraph 202 of the Framework. I have reached this conclusion as some of the special interest of the dwelling would be retained through the use of vernacular materials in its construction. Accordingly, it would continue to make a valid contribution to the Conservation Area in this regard. Paragraph 200 states that any harm to, or

loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Paragraph 202 requires that, where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm, the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

11. The Listed Building Window Condition Report provides an evaluation of the overall condition of the windows. The windows are in a generally poor state of repair, however the cost of refurbishment would not necessarily cost more than the supply costs for the proposed replacement windows. The installation of modern glazing would improve the energy efficiency of the building which would clearly be a benefit of the proposal. However, there are other methods available to improve the energy efficiency of the building that would not result in harm to the listed building and the Conservation Area.
12. There are public benefits that would be realised through the replacement of the windows. However, I consider that these would be as a result of considerable harm to the special architectural and historical interest of the listed building, and subsequent failure to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Accordingly, the public benefits of the proposals would not outweigh the less than substantial harm that would be caused to the significance of the designated heritage assets; harm that must attract considerable importance and weight.
13. I have considered the appeal referred to by the Appellant¹. Whilst the appeal is relevant I consider that there are material differences with regards to the scheme considered by that Inspector. I have found that it may be possible to address the benefits associated with energy efficiency through other avenues, and I have determined this proposal in that context.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I find that the proposed replacement windows would harm the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. Further, it would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

J Ayres

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/H1705/Y/19/3244079