



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2022

by Mrs H Nicholls FdA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/21/3286624

Yew Tree Cottage, Up Somborne Lane, Up Somborne SO20 6RB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Dr Jones against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02344/FULLS, dated 6 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is install replacement windows and French doors to property.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal, whilst relating to a planning matter, would involve works to a listed building for which separate Listed Building Consent (LBC) would be necessary. Though LBC was applied for and refused by the Council¹, that refusal is not the subject of a separate appeal.
3. For the purposes of this appeal, I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building known as 'Yew Tree Cottage and Maisemore', its setting, and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

5. The appeal building, Yew Tree Cottage, (listed as Yew Tree Cottage and Maisemore as one Grade II building, list entry number: 140805), is one of a pair of semi-detached cottages within the small rural village of Up Somborne. The statutory list entry description identifies the appeal building as a pair of early C19 cottages, constructed of red brick and with a thatched roof. The cottages have a shared central stack and separate stacks to the original outer walls. They also have front doors under open pent-roofed porches, timber casement windows, and upper window heads set within eyebrow dormers.
6. The cottages are two storeys in height, originally with three small bays. The appeal building has previously been extended so that it now has a fourth bay, constructed in the same style as the rest of the cottage. The rear of the

¹ Under application reference 21/02345/LBWS, refused on 13 October 2021

cottages have also been altered and individualised. The appeal building hosts a timber conservatory projection (with double glazed timber-framed glazing), in addition to a rearward projection over two storeys which also forms part of the extension to its side. The symmetry of the appeal building has been partly eroded by the side extension, but its construction true to the style and in the materials of the original building has not harmed its overall integrity.

7. Given the above, I find that the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with its early C19 date, its vernacular design, overall composition of the principal elevation, surviving traditional materials, along with its detailing and construction.
8. The proposal seeks to replace 15 windows, from timber, single pane, side-hung casement windows to timber, flush-fitting casements with double glazed units. The glazing would have an overall thickness of 28 mm. The proposal also includes the replacement of the double doors with timber double doors which would have double glazed lights.
9. Of the existing windows, five are within the extension to the building, and I observed that 10 windows (5 within the front and 5 in the rear) are older. The newer windows in the extension, all single glazed, appeared to be in reasonable condition. Of the older windows, those in the front appeared to have some signs of age and wear, despite layers of paint. The older rear windows appeared to be in a poorer condition still, with some cracks and areas of repair work. The evidence of the appellant, albeit limited, is that the window frames are rotten in places and have already been repaired with filler.
10. Irrespective of their condition, the windows add to the listed building's authenticity, and thus to its significance and special interest. The newer windows and double doors in the extension do not add special interest, but their single glazed form and style is true to the appearance of those historically installed in the building, helping to maintain its character and integrity. Given that the character of the older windows has been acquired over many years, their replacement would result in the loss of a feature that adds to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.
11. Whilst the proposed replacement timber casements have been designed to replicate the existing windows in terms of their frame size, glazing bar patterns and number of divisions, the glazing units would be at the thickest end of the spectrum at 28mm. This thickness of unit would appear particularly bulky, with limited reveals, and lacking finesse when compared to the existing slender, single glazed windows.
12. On the evidence before me, I am not satisfied that the windows could not be repaired by traditional means. Moreover, it seems unlikely that replacement of all of the windows would be justified on the grounds of decay. Even if there were justification to replace one or more of the windows, I am not satisfied that the design of the units before me is the most appropriate option. Nor is there clear evidence that this is the only way to improve thermal insulation.
13. Whilst the appellant indicates that the scale and visual appearance of the windows would be unchanged, and that the distance of the dwelling from the road means that it is not prominent, I do not agree that this would be the case. Whether or not the windows would be seen, they are historic fabric, the loss of which is not taken lightly. In any event, the building is visible from the public

realm and the windows, in the form they are seen, contribute to the aesthetic of the listed building as a whole.

14. Removing the existing windows would fail to preserve the listed building. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policies E1 and E9 of the Test Valley Borough Council Local Plan (2016), which seek to secure a high quality of development, in terms of design and local distinctiveness, and permit development only where it would make a positive contribution to sustaining or enhancing the significance of the heritage asset taking account of its character, appearance and setting. It would also conflict with the expectations of section 66(1) of the Act.
15. Under the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the degree of harm would be less than substantial. The Framework requires that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits.
16. The public benefits in this case would result from the potential improvement to the building's thermal efficiency, which is also suggested links with the need to replace its main heating source in the near future. However, in the absence of detailed evidence regarding the thermal performance of the proposed windows or comparison with the existing or any alternatives considered, I attribute this public benefit only limited weight. Furthermore, the marginal soundproofing and safety benefits that would accrue from new double glazed units are also very limited.
17. As such, in my view, the limited public benefits are not of a magnitude that outweighs the identified harm to the significance of the heritage asset, and the considerable importance this carries.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is dismissed.

Hollie Nicholls

INSPECTOR