



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 May 2022

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/Y/22/3290461

Home Farmhouse, 2 Honey Knob Hill South C154 Through Village to Tor Hill, Kington St Michael, SN14 6HX

- 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 Squires against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/09302/LBC, dated 13 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 July 2021.
 - The works proposed are described as 'maintenance completed to existing stone boundary wall and stone lintel added over stream'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and listed building consent is granted for work described as 'maintenance completed to existing stone boundary wall and stone lintel added over stream', at Home Farmhouse, 2 Honey Knob Hill South C154 Through Village to Tor Hill, Kington St Michael, SN14 6HX, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 20/09302/LBC, dated 13 March 2020, and the plans submitted with it.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Squires against Wiltshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. Home Farm is a Grade II listed building that stands immediately to the northwest of the site. The appeal site area is defined by a boundary wall that encloses an orchard. The Council is of the view that the enclosing walls are part of the listed building with reference to Provision 1(5) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA). Although there is some challenge to this matter by the appellant, the Council's position is accepted within the submitted Heritage Impact Assessment, dated 17 November 2021. Based on the information before me I have no reason to disagree with the Council's position. I will thus determine the appeal on the basis that the boundary walls enclosing the orchard form part of the grade II listing of Home Farm.
4. The work has already been carried out. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

5. The effect of the works upon the significance of the grade II listed building and whether the works preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Kington St Michael Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

6. Section 16(2) of the LBCA requires the decision maker to have 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 of the LBCA requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area.
7. The list description suggests that the farmhouse dates from the late 17th or early 18th century. It faces out over the road with a well composed elevation, although the make up of the wall indicates that this façade was altered. It stands to the northwest of the orchard, at a higher level. The enclosed orchard is shown on a mid-19th century map and appears to retain a spatial arrangement that has been unchanged since then.
8. The significance of the historic fabric that makes up the walls is limited, particularly as the construction of individual sections varies, and they have been subject to various phases of repair. However, they provide a traditional method of enclosure to the historic orchard that contributes positively to the wider setting of the farmhouse, reinforcing its agricultural origins and maintaining its rural setting. Similarly, the orchard area contributes positively to the vernacular appearance of the rural village CA, particularly where it provides a prominent definition to the road.
9. A section of the wall along the southeast boundary has been rebuilt. The former cock and hen top to the wall has been replaced with flat stones, set in a deep bed of cement mortar. Photos before me show what the wall looked like when the work was first carried out. At my visit I could see that the rebuilt section has weathered down significantly when compared with the photos, to the extent that the areas of cement are not prominent.
10. I accept that the use of cementitious mortar is not usually appropriate for such work. In this case its use is however limited to the bedding of the stones at the top of the wall only, and it appears to have been used on other sections of wall enclosing the orchard.
11. The loss of the wall's cock and hen top in the area of the rebuild has lowered the height of this section and changed the appearance of the wall. The wall is varied in height in any case around its perimeter and I could see adjacent sections that are finished with a flat stone top that do not appear to have been subject to recent repair. Furthermore, this finish is used locally. It is therefore a detail that does not appear out of place in the context of Home Farm and the CA.
12. A small culvert has also been altered. Previous clay pipes have been replaced with a wider opening in the wall, with the masonry above supported by a block of cut stone. There is no evidence to suggest that the clay pipes that were removed had any historic significance. The block of stone that has been used is visually appropriate. At my visit I could see that it has also weathered down

significantly when compared with the photo before me. It is at a low level and is not prominent to view.

13. The Council refers to the loss of decorative details on the face of the wall. It is not clear what this relates to, however one of the appellant's photos shows what looks like a face marked out by separate stones set within the wall, in the area over the clay pipes. There is no evidence before me relating to the significance of these or any other decorative details that have been lost as a result of the work. I consider it highly unlikely that the arrangement of these stones had any historic significance.
14. Taking these matters together, although the wall has been altered and some detail of the repair does not follow good conservation practice, the rebuilt wall is at a low level at the bottom of the orchard. I have found that the significance of the wall's fabric is limited, and it largely stands underneath mature tree canopies where it is not prominent to view. It still serves to enclose the orchard in a traditional manner. For these reasons, I am satisfied that the works have not caused harm to the special interest or significance of the listed building and have preserved the character and appearance of the CA, and thus satisfy the requirements of the LBCA. I have come to this view having regard to the great weight that the National Planning Policy Framework gives to the conservation of heritage assets.

Other Matters

15. I have carefully considered the comments from the neighbour. The appeal proposal does not include the provision of a sluice gate, so I need not consider this matter further.
16. Matters relating to the impact of the works on water flow are outside the scope of the LBCA and are covered by other legislation.
17. Whilst I appreciate the neighbour's frustrations over how long this subject has been under consideration, such matters should have no bearing on my consideration of the appeal before me, which should be determined on the basis of its merits.

Conditions

18. The Council does not consider it necessary to impose any conditions in the event that the appeal is allowed. I agree that it is not necessary for me to impose any conditions as the grant of listed building consent will allow the work to be retained.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons above the appeal should be allowed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR