
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2022

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/Y/22/3291021

College Farm, Beacon Lane, Haresfield, Stonehouse GL10 3ES

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Barbara Manzi-fe against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.21/1375/LBC, dated 28 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2021.
 - The works proposed are a replacement porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was made, and the appeal was lodged in the name of the agent. The identity of the applicant has however been subsequently clarified and is thus named as the appellant in the banner heading above.
3. This decision concerns an appeal against the Council's refusal of an application for listed building consent. Though the submissions reference a related planning application which was also refused by the Council, this has not been appealed. It is not the purpose of this decision to consider the potential merits of such an appeal were it to be lodged.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the scheme would preserve a Grade II listed building and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

5. College Farmhouse is a Grade II listed building, and thus a designated heritage asset. Whilst the Act sets out the desirability of preserving listed buildings, paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
6. Insofar as it is relevant to this appeal the special interest and significance of the listed building resides in its possible C16-17th origin, and traditional stone construction, which features a simply detailed 3 bay rectilinear form and small window openings. Though the building has been substantially extended through the addition of a linked building of contrasting modern style, the historic part of the building remains reasonably distinct.

7. The scheme would see replacement of the porch attached to the front elevation of the historic farmhouse. The porch is reasonably modern and holds no historic or architectural interest in itself. It is nonetheless of traditional form, modestly scaled, faced in stone, and serves to simply provide an enclosed point of entry. As such it is an unremarkable but generally unobtrusive minor component of the front elevation.
8. The proposed porch would mirror the form of the existing porch, but on a much increased scale, being significantly larger in every dimension, and extending almost to eaves height. The resulting increase in floor space and volume would be such that the porch would form a small room, as is reflected in its intended function. Unlike the existing porch, that proposed would therefore neither be viewed nor perceived as a minor component of the frontage. It would instead appear disproportionate in scale, both physically and visually overpowering the otherwise simple front elevation. Its resulting lack of integration would be further accentuated by the significant amount of glazing employed. Whether or not this might find reference in the modern extension, it would again be at odds with the arrangement of relatively small windows which characterise the front elevation. The porch would therefore appear harmfully incongruous.
9. It is stated that the proposed porch would better present the historic front door and enable service installations to be hidden. However, the front door would be little more visible than it is at present, and more sensitive ways of hiding service installations may well exist. Neither therefore provides any clear basis to justify the adverse effects identified above.
10. I therefore find that the scheme would both fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and fail to conserve its significance. In relation to the latter the harm caused would be less than substantial. Such harm attracts great weight. In accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework it is necessary to weigh this harm against the public benefits of the scheme.
11. The scheme has been advanced as providing enhancements. However, given that I have established above that the overall effects of the scheme would be harmful, this claim cannot attract weight. Insofar as the provision of enlarged accommodation would be a private benefit, this too attracts no weight. Implementing the scheme would otherwise generate minor work/trade for businesses. However, the benefits of this to the broader economy would be negligible. That and the above being so, the public benefits of the scheme would not outweigh the harm that it would cause.
12. For the reasons outlined above I conclude that the scheme would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, contrary to the expectations of the Act and heritage policy set out within the Framework. Insofar as it is relevant the scheme would additionally conflict with Policy ES10 of the Stroud District Local Plan which seeks to preserve, protect or enhance Stroud District's historic environment.

Other Matters

13. The site is located within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB), within which there is a duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing natural beauty. As the scheme would involve works with little exposure beyond their immediate setting, and none within the surrounding landscape, the natural beauty of the AONB would be conserved.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR