The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 June 2022

by Michael Boniface MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/Y/22/3291330
5 Windmill Gardens, Staverton, Northamptonshire, NN11 6DD

- 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 Paul Baker against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
- The application Ref WND/2021/0089, dated 28 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 August 2021.
- The works proposed are the modification of a roof truss.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The proposed works relate to a property which is classified as a curtilage listed building under Section 1(5) (b) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), and as such is treated as part of the Grade II listed Home Farmhouse. The building is also in a conservation area. I have therefore had regard to Sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Act.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, Home Farmhouse (and its curtilage structures), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

4. Home Farmhouse was built in the early C18th and includes a datestone which reads: 'G.J.M 1712'. It is two storeys of ironstone ashlar with a rebuilt brick cornice and tiled roof. It was the main farmhouse with which the associated agricultural buildings stood, forming a typically arranged farmstead on a primary route through this rural settlement. As such, it has significant architectural and historic interest which extends to the curtilage structures that have since been converted to residential use.

5. The appeal property is not listed in its own right but as one of the curtilage structures to Home Farmhouse. Its preservation therefore carries the same considerable importance and weight as the principal listed building. Although the barn has been converted to residential use, with other residential properties built close by significantly changing the formerly agricultural setting,

the former physical and functional relationship between the properties remains discernible, particularly from Daventry Road.

6. The appeal property is an attractive stone-built and slate roofed barn that retains its typical rectilinear form. Internally, the roof structure is exposed so that a series of regularly spaced trusses are apparent across its length. These timbers celebrate the historic fabric remaining within the building and punctuate the roof void that is indicative of the former agricultural form and dimensions within the building. They are a significant and important architectural feature.

7. There is some suggestion that the truss in question may have been moved during the barn's conversion to a residential property but there is little evidence before me to support this assertion. Even if this original fabric was removed and re-sited, there would be harm in cutting through it in in order to raise it and refix, as well as a disruption to the rhythm of the regular spacing and height of the trusses that are important in interpreting the former roof space and structure.

8. Although the works would be modest and internal, listed buildings and their curtilage structures are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of some of the features can be gained.

9. The harm arising would be less than substantial in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) but is nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. I have carefully considered the concerns of the appellant in relation to head room in the bedroom and acknowledge the height of the truss is inconvenient, being located in the middle of the room and requiring occupants to duck underneath. However, historic fabric should be retained wherever possible and living in historic buildings often requires a degree of compromise in order to preserve their interest.

10. This is not a case where the room is unusable or where there is a risk to the building's ongoing residential use. Furthermore, with a degree of caution from the occupants, it is not credible to suggest that the truss is unsafe. Whilst the proposed works would no doubt benefit the current and future occupants, there would be little public benefit arising from the scheme, certainly not of sufficient scale to outweigh the harm that I have identified.

11. Given the above, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building, thus failing to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 197 of the Framework and development plan policies insofar as relevant.

Other Matters

12. The appeal property is located within the Staverton Conservation Area but the proposed works would be entirely internal with no visibility from outside. As such, the proposed works would not affect the experience of the conservation area or harm its character or appearance. The requirements of the Act and paragraph 197 of the Framework are therefore satisfied.

13. However, this does not alter the harm that I have found in respect of the listed building, which should be protected regardless.

Conclusion

14. In light of the above, the appeal is dismissed.

Michael Boniface

INSPECTOR