



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2022

by Ms S Watson BA(Hons), MCD, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21/09/2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T5720/Y/22/3296326

479 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 4BB

- 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 Hay and Miss Edis against the decision of London Borough of Merton.
 - The application Ref 21/P0280, dated 13 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 29 October 2021.
 - The works for which consent is sought are new/replacement internal doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for new replacement internal doors at 479 London Road, Mitcham, CR4 4BB in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/P0280 dated 21/P0280 and the plans submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. The doors have been installed so I am considering this appeal retrospectively.
3. I have removed "following flood damage" from the description of development as it is superfluous.
4. As the appeal relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the alterations on the special interest of the Grade II listed building.

Reasons

6. The appeal property is within Mill Cottages, a Grade II Listed Building, which is a row of cottages dating from the 18th century. The row is faced in painted weatherboarding with pantiled pitched and partly hipped roofs. The south façade is to the river with two 3-window ranges joined by a single storey 2 window range. It has square headed sashed windows with glazing bars and a west façade of 3 windows with a central canopied entrance. The significance of Mill Cottages is its age and architectural detailing.
7. A Heritage Significance Report has been submitted by the Appellant which provides evidence that much of the appeal house is of a modern construction due to it previously falling into repair and being affected by dry rot. It was extensively renovated in the 1980s. It has modern roof trusses, modern

softwood cladding, plasterboard ceilings with gypsum plaster, modern sash windows, modern architraves and skirtings and a concrete floor. Evidence of an earlier brick chimney remains.

8. Although the heritage significance of the appeal site itself is tempered by the previous renovation works carried out, it nevertheless contains remnants of the original building and its external appearance mimics the original fabric. It therefore contributes to the value of the listed building as a whole and its continued presence is an integral part of the listed terrace.
9. The doors which were removed dated from around the 1980s and I was able to see what remains of them at my visit. They were of a very similar design and profile to the doors which are subject of this appeal.
10. The previous doors were softwood, panelled doors. Photographs from the appellant show that at least one of the doors had a modern metal flush handle. I appreciate that old houses change over time and that different doors can be part of the story of some houses but in this case, due to their age and design, I consider that the previous doors made no meaningful contribution to the heritage significance of the Listed Building. The fact that they were installed and considered to be acceptable after the house was listed does not imbue them with historic significance or indicate that they should be preserved.
11. The new doors are very similar except they are oak and have black metal flush handles. Oak is a more appropriate material for the age of the building than softwood. The new doors have not resulted in the removal of the original fabric of the building.
12. On the evidence before me, I consider that the alterations have not harmed features that contribute to the significance of the asset. I conclude that the alterations preserve the building and its special interest, consequently, I find no conflict with Policy HC1 of the London Plan; Policies DMD2, DMD3 and DMD4 of the Merton Sites and Policies Plan 2014; or Policy CS14 of the Merton Core Strategy. In combination, these policies seek ensure high quality design and to conserve heritage assets.

Other Matters

13. The house is within the Wandale Valley Conservation Area. As the works are internal, and preserve the special interest of the listed building, the character and appearance of the conservation area are preserved.

Conditions

14. The Council has requested a condition that the doors should be painted to resemble the 1980s doors. However, I do not consider that this is necessary to preserve the special interest of the building.

Conclusion

15. I allow the appeal.

Ms S Watson

INSPECTOR