



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 6 September 2022

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 October 2022

Appeal A Ref: APP/Y3615/W/22/3291127

Hayloft and Grooms Cottage, Mill Lane, Pirbright, GU24 0BN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Hugh Dennis against Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/P/01917, is dated 6 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is internal alterations to Hayloft and Grooms Cottage, removal of internal partition to remove the flying freehold and reincorporate the two-storey part of Grooms Cottage back into Hayloft. Erection of a Single storey rear extension to Grooms cottage and internal alterations.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Y3615/Y/22/3293147

Hayloft and Grooms Cottage, Mill Lane, Pirbright, GU240BN

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Hugh Dennis against Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/P/01918 is dated 6 September 2021.
 - The works proposed are internal alterations to Hayloft and Grooms Cottage, removal of internal partition to remove the flying freehold and reincorporate the two-storey part of Grooms Cottage back into Hayloft. Erection of a Single storey rear extension to Grooms cottage and internal alterations.
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Decision – Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.

Decision – Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused.

Preliminary Matters

3. Although the site address on the application form only refers to Hayloft, the proposal relates to Grooms Cottage as well. Both addresses are used on the appeal correspondence. I have reflected this in the banner headings above.
4. The appeals relate to the same proposal under different legislation. Appeal A is made in respect of the planning application and Appeal B in respect of the listed building consent. I have considered each appeal on its own merits.
5. The appeals result from the Councils' failure to determine the applications within the prescribed period. There are no formal decisions on the applications, as jurisdiction over that was taken away when the appeals were lodged. The views expressed by the Council in relation to the proposal are limited to the

comments made by the Conservation Officer. These have informed the main issues of the appeal.

6. At my visit I saw that an extension has been erected at the rear of Grooms Cottage. However, what I saw on site differed to the proposal set out on the plans before me with regard to the rooflight arrangement and design of glazing at the gable end. I also saw that the ridge of the extension aligns with the existing ridge of Grooms Cottage, whereas the plans show that it would be slightly lower. The access from the entrance lobby of Hayloft to the garden differs from that shown on the plans. On the basis of these discrepancies and, most significantly, the differences to the design of the extension, I have based my assessment of the proposal primarily on the plans before me rather than what I observed at my site visit.

Main Issue

7. The main issue for both appeals is the effect of the proposal upon the significance of the grade II listed building known as The Hayloft and Former Stable Block to Pirbright Lodge.

Reasons

8. Section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (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.
9. The two storey building dates from the late 18th century. It has a fine and well composed front elevation, derived from its symmetrical arrangement and neatly constructed brick dressings. Alongside and attached to this stands a much simpler single storey building that has a more utilitarian appearance and a much more modest scale. The two buildings are covered by a single listing designation.
10. The buildings face out onto a cobbled yard and towards the rear of Pirbright Lodge. Together with the Lodge they form a good group, and are illustrative of the function, order and hierarchy of a small country estate. These characteristics contribute to the building's special interest, as does the architectural form of its primary elevation and its simple and uncluttered roofscape.
11. The building was converted into two dwellings in the 1970s. The two storey stable building formed one dwelling and the single storey wing the other, apart from part of the first floor of the stable that provided the smaller dwelling with two bedrooms. The re-worked division of the two parts of the building would do away with the flying freehold arrangement and would create a straightforward vertical division of the building into two dwellings. I note that the Council has no objection to this part of the proposal and I see no reason to disagree.
12. Similarly, internal alterations relate to fabric that largely dates from the 1970s and is of no historic interest. I am therefore also satisfied that the internal changes would not harm the building's special interest.
13. The proposal includes an extension that would abut the rear of the modest single storey part of the building, which is the dwelling known as Grooms Cottage. I accept that this would extend out a significant distance from the rear

of this part of the building. However, owing to the relative levels, and the relationship it would hold alongside the re-aligned boundary, the extension would not appear overscaled.

14. It would however have a prominent roof, which would be seen alongside the existing roof at the rear of Grooms Cottage on one side, and would face towards the rear of Hayloft in the other direction. The roofscape of the appeal building is a significant component of its special interest. From areas of the rear gardens the rear of the appeal building can be seen in the context of the other buildings to the southeast. Three rooflights on each roof plane would draw the eye, particularly in the context of the existing roofs which are largely free of such interruptions. This arrangement would harm the special interest of the building, and in particular the simple appearance of its rear aspect, which is seen in the context of the wider building group.
15. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the harm would be less than substantial. Paragraph 202 of the Framework establishes that any harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
16. I accept that the proposal is part of a wider scheme to rationalise the layout of the building to provide a more logical subdivision for the two dwellings. This could be considered a public benefit insofar as it would create a better layout for the two dwellings, which could be good for the long term conservation of the building.
17. I was not able to review the 1970s layout at the time of my visit as it had already been altered. I do note however that the flying freehold subdivision appears to have existed since the building was converted into two dwellings in the 1970s. Whilst some of the spaces appear a little awkward on plan, there is nothing before me to suggest that the layout was unworkable or that it prevented either building from being occupied. These factors lessen the weight I give to this public benefit.
18. The proposal would cause harm to the special interest of the building. Paragraph 199 of the Framework establishes that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset. The public benefit before me is limited. Furthermore, I am not satisfied that the rooflights within the roof of the extension are necessary to achieve this benefit. Accordingly, the public benefit is not sufficient to outweigh the level of harm identified.
19. In summary, the proposal would fail to meet the requirements of the LBCA as it would harm the special interest of the building. It would be contrary to Policies D1 and D3 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 (LP), which together seek to ensure that development proposals are designed to a high quality that responds to distinctive character and conserves and enhances the historic environment.

Other Matters

20. With reference to Appeal A only, the Council has advised that the site is within the Green Belt. Despite an invitation to do so the Council has not provided any comments on this matter. Paragraph 149 of the Framework establishes that new buildings within a Green Belt are inappropriate unless, amongst other things, they constitute the extension of a building provided that it does not

result in a disproportionate addition over and above the size of the original building.

21. Policy P2 of the LP defines the original building as the building as it existed on 1 July 1948. This predates the conversion of the building into two dwellings. I am satisfied that the further addition proposed at the rear of the building would not be a disproportionate addition to the original building even if I take into account the existing extension. Therefore, I do not consider it necessary to make this a main issue of the appeal.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons above, both appeals should be dismissed and planning permission and listed building consent refused.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR