



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 2 November 2022

by Mr JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P1615/W/22/3300794

Monks Spout Cottage, Glasshouse Hill, May Hill, GL17 0NN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr N Jackson against the decision of Forest of Dean District Council.
 - The application Ref P1630/21/FUL, dated 22 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a replacement single-storey rear extension.
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Appeal Ref: APP/P1615/Y/22/3300799

Monks Spout Cottage, Glasshouse Hill, May Hill, GL17 0NN

- 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 N Jackson against the decision of Forest of Dean District Council.
 - The application Ref P1631/21/LBC, dated 22 September 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 April 2022.
 - The works proposed are the erection of a replacement single-storey rear extension.
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Decisions

APP/P1615/W/22/3300794

1. The appeal is dismissed

APP/P1615/Y/22/3300799

2. The appeal is dismissed

Preliminary Matters

3. Before the deadline for the Council to send in its Statement of Case, a 10-page document from its Conservation and Design Consultant was submitted, raising concerns about the scheme. The appellant invited me to disregard this, as he contended it was additional evidence to that on which the Council had made its decision, and because it was disproportionate in its scale for a case of this type.
4. However, although submitted by a different advisor to the one who had commented on the applications, I did not see it as significantly new evidence and it did not raise new concerns. Rather, as is common with Statements of Case, it was an explanation of the Council's position as outlined, in this instance, in the officer report and the consultation responses. It also reiterated a number of the points made in the appellant's heritage submissions (which I would have assessed in any event), and addressed the issues raised

by the appellant in his Grounds of Appeal. There was also opportunity for the appellant to respond. Accordingly, I have taken this document into account when assessing the merits of the appeals.

5. Whether or not it was reasonable to submit such a document at that stage is something I will consider in the application for full costs that the appellant has made against the Council, and which is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in this case is whether the works would harm the special architectural or historic interest of this Grade II listed building, and whether they would harm its significance as a designated heritage asset.

Reasons

7. Monks Spout Cottage is a 1½ storey former farmhouse that dates from about 1700. It originally had a simple 2-bay linear form and was of a timber frame with infill panels. Its significance is therefore partly historic and partly architectural, as its materials and plan form reflect a dwelling of this date, whilst its age, its layout, its craftsmanship and its construction method contribute to its special architectural and historic interest.
8. Over time though it has been extended at both ends. However, these additions are broadly of a sympathetic design, and while they each project rearwards, this projection is only relatively slight. They therefore maintain a sense of subservience in relation to the original building. Although they have taken the form of the dwelling away from the original simple linear plan to some extent, that can still be appreciated and the overall significance of the property is still apparent.
9. In the last 20 years or so, a conservatory with glazed walls on a stone plinth and glazed roofing has been added onto one of these projecting rear elements, thereby extending it further back from the original dwelling. Adjoining it is also a lean-to utility room.
10. The proposal is seeking to replace this existing conservatory and lean-to with new, similar structures. The works would cause no harm to historic fabric. They would also deliver some benefit to the cottage's significance. This is because the existing conservatory is of a dated appearance with a chunky, stained, wooden frame that relates poorly to the listed building. In contrast, the new conservatory would have extensive glazing with no plinth, and the frame supporting the roof would be of a sensitive weathered oak. The utility room and toilet would also be better integrated into the dwelling, with the use of more sympathetic materials and an exposure of slightly more of the original building.
11. However, balanced against this, the new conservatory would be appreciably larger, extending 50% further from the rear of the adjoining extension. Furthermore, whilst the lack of a plinth and the nature of the frame would make the walls appear lighter, roughly two-thirds of its roof would not be glazed but rather would be of seam metal. The effect of this roofing would be particularly noticeable given the elevated nature of the dwelling's driveway, and would undermine its light-weight, subservient nature.

12. On balance, I acknowledge the shortcomings of the existing conservatory, but I consider that the increased size of the proposal and its solid roof, when taken together, would result in an extension that had a far more striking and substantial presence on the building. As a result, even though it would be separated from the oldest part of the cottage, its scale and dominance mean it would take the dwelling further away from its simple historic linear plan form, which is a fundamental part of its significance, and make it more difficult to appreciate the original character and appearance of the house.
13. The works could well be reversible, but I have no reason to consider that would occur and, even if it did happen, it would have an adverse effect in the meantime. As such, this does not overcome the concerns I have identified. I also accept that it is difficult to see through the glazing in the roof at the moment due to its condition and the blinds behind. Nonetheless, I consider it has a more light-weight character than the new roofing now proposed.
14. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would cause harm, albeit less than substantial, to the significance of the listed building, and would fail to preserve its special architectural and historic interest. Indeed, if I were to place this on the spectrum of less than substantial harm, I would judge it to be moderate, due to the relative size of the cottage and the contribution its plan form makes to its significance.
15. The *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) says that when considering the impact of a proposal on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation, with any harm to its significance requiring clear and convincing justification. It adds that if less than substantial harm is identified to a designated heritage asset, it should be weighed against the scheme's public benefits.
16. In this regard the appellant has highlighted the environmental benefits of energy efficiency resulting from the improved design. It would also create a more useable space when compared to the existing conservatory with its great temperature variations. Such improvements are to be expected given the age of what is there now. However, I see no reason why these benefits should outweigh the harm resulting from the increased size and presence of the proposal.
17. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not preserve the special architectural or historic interest of this Grade II listed building, and would cause less than substantial harm to its significance as a designated heritage asset. In the absence of any clear and convincing justification for the works and any public benefits to outweigh this harm, the proposal would conflict with the Framework, Policy CSP1 in the Council's *Core Strategy* and Policy AP5 in its *Allocations Plan 2006-2026*, all of which seek to protect and enhance heritage assets.

Conclusion

18. I therefore conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

JP Sargent

INSPECTOR