



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2023

by E Worthington BA (Hons) MTP MUED MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/Y/22/3308249

YHA Youlgreave, Fountain Square, Derbyshire, DE45 1UR

- 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 Colin Trigg against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref NP/DDD/0222/0142, dated 31 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2022.
 - The works proposed are described as 'Replacement of 2 existing single glazed shopfront windows with double glazed units and reinstatement of transom to one window'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the proposed works are in a conservation area and relate to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. The settlement is referred to as Youlgreave in some of the documentation associated with the appeal. However, I have used the spelling Youlgreave in the banner heading above to accord with the application form and the listed building entry. For the sake of consistency I have used this spelling throughout my decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed works would preserve a grade II listed building, YHA Hostel, Fountain Square (Ref: 1335000) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and
 - whether the proposed works would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Youlgreave Conservation Area, and whether they would preserve the settings of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

The listed building, the conservation area, and the settings of the listed buildings

5. Built in 1887 the appeal building was previously the co-operative store and warehouse and was converted into a youth hostel in 1974.
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6. It is constructed of squared rock-faced gritstone with gritstone dressings and quoins and a hipped slate roof. Four storeys high with a three bay façade the tall and slender building is set back from the road behind front steps and railings and faces out onto Fountain Square. It displays an arcade of three distinctive semi-circular headed moulded arches to the ground floor. The central opening has a doorcase, and those to either side have large windows, all of which have glazed fanlights which are inscribed in gold lettering (in relation to the building's use by the Co-op).
7. The building has undergone some alterations, including to the shopfront. Despite these, it retains its imposing form, pleasing proportions, characteristic openings, striking architectural features and traditional materials. In particular it remains an excellent example of a surviving historic shopfront typical of its type and of the Victorian period. As a consequence, its historic form is clearly legible and the building maintains its traditional character and charm as a building of some standing and importance in the settlement.
8. I appreciate that the list entry refers to the building's group value and will consider the other nearby listed buildings below. Nevertheless, it remains that the appeal building is listed in its own right. Thus, from the listing description and the other evidence before me, insofar as it relates to this appeal, I find that the special interest of the listed building is drawn from its age, distinctive openings and traditional shopfront including its fenestration, as well as its historic fabric and architectural features. All these elements are important overall to the special interest of the building in terms of this appeal.
9. The appeal building is within the Youlgreave Conservation Area which covers the central historic core of the rural linear settlement. It includes a strong collection of historic buildings, predominantly gritstone and limestone which provide a unified appearance to the conservation area. Thus I consider that the significance of the conservation area, in so far as it relates to this appeal, is mainly derived from the quality of historic buildings, the use of traditional materials, and the long established historic townscape.
10. Fountain Square is at the west end of what would have been the medieval village and a focal point in the settlement. The appeal building is at a higher level to the square and taller than the surrounding vernacular cottages. It has an imposing presence in the square and is a key feature of this part of the conservation area where its elegant form and more sophisticated architectural detailing, including the impressive shopfront, stand out. Thus the appeal building contributes positively to the historic character and appearance of the conservation area and its significance as a heritage asset in relation to this appeal.
11. Turning to the nearby listed buildings, these include adjoining Stores Cottage to the rear of the appeal building which dates to the 18th century, the circular Conduit Head in Market Square built in 1829, the Thimble Hall in Fountain Square, and the Bulls Head Pub a 18th century coaching Inn. Together with the appeal building these Grade II listed buildings form a consolidated group of historic buildings in the core of the village. Despite their different ages, and accepting that they all have their own particular features of interest and significance, there is a cohesiveness to this concentration of traditional buildings.

12. The significance of these buildings, insofar as relating to this appeal, is derived from their historic interest, traditional appearance and relationship with each other in the townscape which collectively provide evidence of the role of the settlement and its historic development. The settings of these buildings, and the contribution they make to the significance of those assets, insofar as they relate to this appeal, is derived from the traditional historic townscape of this part of Youlgreave.
13. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) defines setting as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. The collection of listed buildings described are close to the appeal building and there is inter-visibility to varying extents between them and the appeal building. Furthermore some contextual views of the nearby listed buildings include the appeal building. I find that the settings of these buildings, in so far as they relate to this appeal, to be primarily associated with the historic importance of the historic townscape and the traditional buildings that it consists of. This contributes positively to their understanding and the special interest and significance of those buildings along with the ability to appreciate them. I have also had special regard to this matter in considering the appeal.

The effect of the proposed works

14. Alterations to the shopfront are proposed such that the two existing large single glazed windows at either side of the doorway would be replaced with double glazed units.
15. The existing glazing in the left hand window appears to have been replaced at some point when the central transom was removed and the head and cill patched. Additionally the internal beading to this window has a plain rectangular section which suggests it has also been in part replaced. Nevertheless, the replacement glass is single glazed and the historic external framing of that window has been retained. The right hand window retains all of its historic glazing, frame, mouldings and central transom to the external face, as well as its historic beading to the internal face. Overall it is appreciated as an attractive and relatively unaltered historic shopfront.
16. In introducing double glazing, the proposed works would appear as an unduly modern and obvious intervention directly at odds with the traditional character of the long standing Victorian shopfront in terms of both its age and its design. By their nature the double glazed units would be deeper and bulkier than the existing single glazed windows and would be appreciated as unsympathetic and clunky additions that would stand out as discordant features and undermine the historic integrity of the shopfront.
17. Additionally, the insertion of the proposed new units would lead to the modification of the historic frames of both windows to accommodate the double glazing. The historic central mullion to the right hand window would also have to be altered to accommodate the thicker double glazing. Whilst the historic moulded frames on the outside of the windows would remain, the beading to the rear face of the windows would be removed and replaced with new timber beading. Although this would be designed to match the original profile of the right hand window, it would nevertheless lead to a further loss of historic fabric.

18. Taking these factors into account, I find that the proposed works would detract from the traditional form and character of the historic shopfront and erode its authenticity. I therefore consider that they would undermine the building's historic legibility and fail to preserve its special interest.
19. I accept that there are some elements of the proposed works that would improve the heritage asset in this case and contribute to its significance. Notably, it is proposed to reinstate the historic central transom to the left hand window to support the double glazed unit and restore the window to its traditional design and proportions. This would match the existing transom in the right hand window and restore symmetry to the building. The Authority agrees that this would re-balance the architecture of the shopfront and recover its original appearance to some extent. Additionally the replacement of the section of uncharacteristic square beading to the rear of the left hand window with new timber to match the historic profile of the beading would be an improvement.
20. Whilst these elements of the works would serve to improve the architectural and historic significance of the building, I am mindful that they could also be achieved via an alternative less harmful scheme, for example one that incorporates more traditional single glazing. Thus these matters are insufficient to outweigh the harm to the significance of the listed building that I have identified.
21. For the reasons given above, I have found that the proposed works would undermine the historic integrity of the appeal building. As previously described, the appeal building is a prominent feature in Fountain Square and in the conservation area, and I have found that it contributes to the character and appearance of the conservation area and the settings of the nearby listed buildings.
22. The settings of the nearby listed buildings are associated with the historic townscape in this part of Youlgreave including the traditional buildings there. In unacceptably eroding these elements which contribute positively to the special interest and significance of those buildings, the proposed works would detract from the settings of the nearby listed buildings.
23. In undermining the settings, which also contribute to the historic significance of the conservation area, and in detracting from the quality of the historic buildings and the long established historic townscape, the proposed works would also detrimentally affect how the conservation area is experienced. I therefore consider that the proposed works would cause harm to the significance of the conservation area and would fail to preserve its character and appearance.

Heritage balance

24. I therefore conclude on the main issues that the proposed works would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the significance of the conservation area and would not preserve the settings of the nearby listed buildings. I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the balance of this appeal.

25. The Framework advises at paragraph 199 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. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets or from development within their setting and that this should have a clear and convincing justification.
26. I find the harm to the heritage assets as identified to be less than substantial in this instance, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 202 of the Framework requires that less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
27. Improvements to the heritage asset itself are also public benefits of the proposal. These are set out above and include the re-introduction of the transom to the left hand window and the replacement of the uncharacteristic square beading there.
28. Permission was granted in 2021 to use the building as a bike shop, café/bar, accommodation and kitchen. Additionally the lower ground floor opening has permission to be converted back to a double doorway entrance. Thus the Authority argues that the optimum viable use of the building has already been achieved in the absence of the proposed works. Even so, I understand that some areas of the external cills and beading are in poor condition and accept that the proposed works would improve the condition of the building and so would help to secure its future protection, maintenance and longevity.
29. Additionally, the proposed works would contribute to conserving heating and fuel thereby improving energy efficiency and reducing the building's carbon footprint. It would also provide a warmer internal environment and improve the amenity of customers. These are also public benefits.
30. That said, I have seen nothing to suggest that any of these public benefits are necessarily dependent on the use of the double glazed units specifically. The use of single glazing (with the possibility of secondary internal glazing) would also allow the benefits considered above to be realised, and would better respect the traditional design and appearance of the historic shopfront. I have seen no evidence to demonstrate that any such options have been considered by the appellant (or as to why they have been discounted). This tempers the weight that I afford to the identified public benefits.
31. The appellant refers to the removal of the more modern staircase immediately behind the right hand window. But since that already has consent and does not form part of the proposed works before me, it is not a particular benefit of the appeal scheme and so does not add any weight in favour of it. I also saw at my visit that the film to the right hand window has already been removed.
32. Taking all these factors into account, I therefore find that the public benefits arising from the proposed works would not outweigh the harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets I have identified. For these reasons the proposed works would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and paragraph 197 of the Framework.

Conclusion

33. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all the other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Worthington

INSPECTOR