



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2023

by A Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W1145/Y/22/3304808

Thatched Cottage, Fore Street, Bradford, Devon, EX22 7AQ

- 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 Austen against the decision of Torridge District Council.
 - The application Ref 1/0166/2022/LBC, dated 15 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 April 2022.
 - The works proposed are described as 'two storey extension, shed, raised planters and gateway feature. The shed, planter and gateway feature have already been built so this is a retrospective application for these elements. Double glazed windows.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council granted planning permission and listed building consent for a lean-to extension to the building. A further submission for planning permission and listed building consent was submitted for essentially the same proposal but with the addition of a bathroom within the newly formed roof space. The description of the proposal used in the banner heading above is taken from the application form for this second submission. The Council granted planning permission for this but refused listed building consent. The appeal follows this refusal.

Main Issue

3. The effect of the proposal upon the significance of the grade II listed building (known as Thatched Cottage on north side of Fore Street).

Reasons

4. Section 16 (2) 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.
5. The appeal building is a modest two storey vernacular cottage, with a one room deep linear plan form. The list description suggests that it dates from the 18th century and may have been two cottages. Its significance is derived from its picturesque appearance, owing to its modest scale, traditional material palette, undulating forms and lack of formality. Additionally, its simple internal layout of interconnecting ground floor rooms is significant, as is the retention of two staircases and a lack of connection at first floor, which strongly points to its former division into two cottages.

6. The consented proposal would extend the dwelling at its northeast end. The Council's concern and reason for refusing the listed building consent lies solely with the proposed insertion of a doorway at first floor level that would connect through from the existing bedroom to the new en-suite bathroom.
7. The appellant's submission does not demonstrate an adequate understanding of the primary fabric of the building, including the way that it has developed and been altered over time. There is nothing before me to show that the end wall has been investigated to inform an understanding of its significance or the extent of historic fabric that is retained beneath its plastered surfaces. Given that the building appears to have formerly served as two cottages it is possible that this wall was once internal and therefore may retain evidence of former openings. It might also retain evidence of a former chimneybreast on the basis that a chimney does not appear to exist at this end of the building. I am therefore unable to conclude that the proposal would not harm the historic fabric of the building.
8. Additionally, in the case of vernacular cottages such as this, it is common for openings to be formed within front and back walls only. End gables are typically solid. I appreciate that once extended the existing end wall of the building would be largely covered; however, the formation of a new opening in the end wall would make the historic plan form of the building less easy to understand and therefore harm the building's significance.
9. The Council has granted consent for a new window to be formed in the rear wall of the building to serve the existing bedroom. For the reasons above it is reasonable for the Council to have viewed this differently to the proposal for the doorway.
10. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the harm to the significance of the building would be less than substantial. Paragraph 202 of the Framework establishes that any harm to a designated heritage asset should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would benefit the occupiers of the dwelling. At my visit I observed that the other two first floor bedrooms are served by an en-suite and cloakroom. The need to use a short flight of stairs to move between a bedroom and bathroom is not a fundamental matter that places the future conservation of the building at risk.
11. It is suggested that the proposal would achieve a better family friendly layout. Its potential to be occupied by a family is however hindered by the lack of connection at first floor level between the bedrooms, and this is not a matter that is resolved by the proposal. The benefits of the proposal are therefore private and limited to the occupiers of the dwelling. With reference to paragraph 202 of the Framework, they cannot outweigh the harm identified. In summary, the proposal would fail to meet the requirements of the LBCA as it would not preserve the special interest of the listed building.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons above, the appeal should be dismissed.

A Tucker

INSPECTOR