



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 March 2023

by Andrew Smith BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/Y/22/3302536

**Lilac Farmhouse, 55 Wappenham Road, Helmdon, Brackley,
Northamptonshire NN13 5QA**

- 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 and Mrs Hugh Walmsley against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WNS/2021/0060/LBC, dated 8 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 January 2022.
 - The works proposed are proposed replacement of defective lintol over entrance door together with new porch to rear entrance hall.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed in so far as it relates to a new porch to rear entrance hall. The appeal is allowed in so far as it relates to defective lintol replacement, such that listed building consent is granted for the replacement of a defective lintol over entrance door at Lilac Farmhouse, 55 Wappenham Road, Helmdon, Brackley, Northamptonshire NN13 5QA in accordance with the terms of the application WNS/2021/0060/LBC, dated 8 March 2021, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.
 - 2) Prior to the commencement of the works hereby permitted, full details of the replacement lintol shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the works shall be carried out in full accordance with the approved details.

Preliminary Matters

2. Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker, when considering whether to grant listed building consent for any works, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building, its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. I shall have regard to this statutory duty in my determination of this appeal.
3. As is apparent from the submitted evidence, the Council does not object to the intended replacement of a defective lintol. Having observed degradation to the lintol above the rear entrance door upon my inspection, I have no reason to arrive at a different finding to the Council. I shall formulate the appeal's main issue on this basis, focussing upon the effect of other proposed works.

Main Issue

4. Whether the proposed porch would preserve the Grade II listed building known as 'The Lilacs' (the listed building), including any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

5. The listed building, formerly a farmhouse, dates to the mid-18th-century. Now a house, its significance and special interest as a designated heritage asset is drawn, in part, from its age, its historic integrity, and its palette of traditional external-facing materials that include coursed limestone rubble to elevations and a slate roof. Significance and special interest is further underpinned by the property's relevance to the historic evolution and rural history of the area, and by its uncomplicated linear form that remains appreciable despite later subordinate extensions to the north.
6. The proposed porch would represent a bulky addition that would extend noticeably forward of the property's principal elevation. Indeed, although to incorporate some traditional features such as a pitched slate roof, the porch would be unsympathetic to the simple linear plan form of the listed building. Furthermore, through adding prominence to the rear entrance and drawing focus away from the original core of the designated asset, the porch would disrupt the visual and historic functional hierarchy of the listed building. As such, the porch would be read and experienced as a discordant and harmful addition.
7. Photographic evidence to demonstrate the past existence of an external canopy above the rear entrance door has been submitted. However, as indicated by the supplied photograph, this feature was small-sized and open-sided and did not alter the listed building's footprint or plan form. Thus, the past existence of this feature does not justify the addition of a noticeably larger enclosed porch.
8. It has been suggested that the proposed porch is typical of many similar buildings within the District, and images of porches attached to other local properties of linear plan form make up part of the submitted evidence. However, my considerations are necessarily centred upon the significance and special interest of the listed building that is the focus of this appeal. Moreover, the other examples provided are not directly comparable and are of limited relevance to my deliberations.
9. For the above reasons, the proposed porch would fail to preserve the listed building and features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses. The degree of harm that would be caused to the significance of the listed building would, in the terms of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021) (the Framework), be less than substantial. Paragraph 202 of the Framework requires less than substantial harm to be outweighed by public benefits.
10. In terms of the porch's benefits, it has been suggested that it would protect the listed building from prevailing adverse weather conditions and thus support its structural integrity and the overall wellbeing of its historic fabric. Whilst the porch would offer shelter from inclement weather, it would provide protection to only a small proportion of the listed building's fabric. Also, there would exist alternative measures to prevent water penetrating internal areas of the

property, such as the small-scale refurbishment or replacement of rotted material. I thus attach limited weight to any public benefit to be drawn in a structural integrity or historic fabric preservation sense.

11. Thermal efficiency improvements (and thus lower associated carbon emissions) have also been put forward as a scheme benefit. This would be as a result of draughts being blocked from entering the property through cracks in and around the rear entrance door. However, significant thermal efficiency improvements have not been clearly substantiated. Furthermore, there would likely exist other means of blocking or reducing incoming draughts without altering the listed building's plan form. I thus attach limited weight to any potential public benefit in a thermal efficiency context.
12. Thus, in the circumstances of this case, the scheme's public benefits would be modest and would not outweigh the harm I have identified. It must be noted that even less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset carries considerable importance and weight.
13. The proposal fails to accord with the historic environment conservation and enhancement policies contained within the Framework and conflict also arises with Policies SS2, SDP1 and HE5 of the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 and Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (adopted December 2014) in so far as these policies set out that designated heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced in recognition of their individual and cumulative significance.

Other Matter and Conditions

14. Whilst I have found the proposed porch to be unacceptable, there is no justification for me to withhold granting listed building consent for the replacement of a defective lintol. Moreover, subject to full details being secured via condition, this particular element of the proposed works would not cause harm to the significance or special interest of the listed building. As the lintol replacement is severable from the proposed porch, I am able to issue a split decision.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons I conclude that the appeal should be allowed only in so far as it relates to the replacement of a defective lintol, but dismissed in so far as it relates to the addition of a porch.

Andrew Smith

INSPECTOR