



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2023

by A Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/Y/22/3306397

Limes Cottage, Village Road, Little Missenden HP7 0RG

- 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 Hunter against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/21/4130/HB, dated 22 October 2021, was refused by notice dated 10 June 2022.
 - The works proposed are described on the application form as 'erection of single storey side extension (in the form of a barn)'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I note that there was an associated application for planning permission at the same site, and that an appeal was also submitted in relation to that. However, that appeal was turned away as it was out of time. Accordingly, this appeal only relates to the refusal of listed building consent, as described in the banner heading. I have determined the appeal against the refusal to grant listed building consent for the works proposed having regard to the statutory duty as set out in section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) and the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building, Limes Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

4. The appeal property is positioned to the eastern part of Little Missenden, set within a large garden plot. It is a Grade II listed building¹, comprising a single dwelling which features 17th century, 18th century² and more modern elements. The dwelling is part timber framed and faced in red brick.

¹ List Entry Number: 1161934

² Noting the appellant's description of phasing.

5. Despite its extension over time, the front of the appeal building has maintained an aesthetically pleasing linear architectural form. Elements of the front, rear and side of the building have been altered in the past, including the insertion of replacement windows, however this has not unduly eroded the building's intrinsic heritage merit.
6. Based on the evidence before me, the building's special interest and significance is largely derived from its surviving 17th century domestic architecture and its linear form, having evolved over time. The building also has group value with nearby properties, including Mill House to the south.

Appeal proposal and effects

7. The proposed works involve the erection of a single-storey rear/side extension. Within the north elevation, a window and part of the external wall would be removed to create an enlarged opening. This would allow a glazed link corridor to be constructed which would lead to the proposed single-storey rear extension, orientated at a right angle to the existing dwelling.
8. I note from the evidence before me, and my observations on site, that the established northern addition to the building has introduced a gable end in the dwelling's principal elevation, and projects forward of the historic building line. The appellant contends that this addition forms an established part of the character of the property. Whilst I accept that this later element is somewhat at odds with the older elements of the property in terms of its detailed design, the predominantly linear evolution of the building, taken as a whole, nonetheless remains intact and a prominent feature. The proposed extension would compromise this, being of a reasonably large scale and positioned at a right angle to the main dwelling, harmfully disrupting the simple form of the existing property. Harm also arises from the effectively detached and offset nature of the extension, albeit with a linking corridor, competing with and detracting from the listed building.
9. Turning to the historic fabric of the building, the window that would be removed in the north elevation is a contemporary replacement within the more recent extension to the building. A small area of masonry would also be removed from below that window. Whilst the resultant loss of historic fabric here would not be significant, and effects the more recent phase of the dwelling, this would not lessen the harm to the listed building overall.
10. I acknowledge that the proposed extension has been designed with some sensitivity in a vernacular style, and with attention to materials and detailing, whilst purposely ensuring a lightweight and modern link design. I also note that it would be partly set into the rising ground level near to a band of mature trees, with limited views from Village Road. However, the building is listed for its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and the visibility of the proposed works is not a determining factor in considering whether they would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the building.
11. Overall, I conclude that the proposed works would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, Limes Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, contrary to the requirements of section 16(2) of the Act. Consequently, the proposal would harm the special interest and significance of this designated heritage asset.

Public benefits and balance

12. Paragraph 199 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
13. With reference to Paragraphs 201 and 202 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent of the works relative to the building as a whole, I find the harm to the listed building would be 'less than substantial' in this instance but, nevertheless, of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, Paragraph 202 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.
14. Economic benefits would be brought about through the construction phase and the general investment into the property. However, the scale of those benefits is short-term and limited by the modest extent and nature of the proposal. The primary outcomes of the proposed works, namely the extension of the building, would be private benefits to the appellant.
15. I accept that listed buildings need to evolve. However, I am not persuaded that the scheme before me is fundamentally necessary to facilitate the optimum viable use of the building. Moreover, whilst I accept the public benefits of the works, these would inevitably be limited and do not provide clear and convincing justification for allowing the appeal.
16. Overall, the weight that I ascribe to the public benefits that would accrue from the proposal, is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that I attach to the harm I have found. Accordingly, the proposed works would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, Limes Cottage, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, contrary to the requirements of section 16(2) of the Act and the relevant provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. The proposed works would also conflict with Policy LB1 of the Chiltern Local Plan (adopted 1997, alterations 2001, consolidated 2007 and 2011), which in summary seeks that development sustains the significance of heritage assets.

Other Matters

17. The appeal property is also located within the Little Missenden Conservation Area (the CA). In line with section 72(1) of the Act, I have paid special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA.
18. Bearing in mind the position, nature and extent of the proposal, I consider that it would have a neutral effect on, and would therefore preserve, the character and appearance of the CA as a whole. As such, the proposal would not harm the significance of this designated heritage asset. I note that the Council had no concerns in these respects either. Nevertheless, the lack of harm in this

respect does not weigh for or against the appeal and does not alter my conclusions on the main issue.

19. Reference has been made to the historic presence of barns on the site and to nearby properties which have been the subject of extension over time. I also note that a letter of support has been received. Nevertheless, the referenced barns do not currently exist and there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate the extent of those buildings or when they existed. The existence of other extensions in the surrounding area, and letters of support, do not provide justification for works that I consider to be harmful to the listed building under this appeal.
20. My attention is drawn to an approved scheme affecting a Grade II listed building at Ladlecombe. Whilst I appreciate that there may be some similarities between that scheme and the appeal before me, I nonetheless have only limited information before me. In any case, I note that that other scheme is located in a different part of the country. As such, the individual details and circumstances of that appeal proposal are not directly comparable to the one before me.
21. I also note the concerns raised by the appellant in respect of communication with officers. Nevertheless, this is not a matter for me to consider as part of this appeal. I have considered the case on the basis of the evidence before me and the individual merits of the proposed works.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, having had regard to all other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Price

INSPECTOR