



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 July 2023

by M Aqbal BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F1610/D/23/3319910

The Old Chapel, Windrush, Gloucestershire OX18 4TT

- 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 Ms Fiona Delevingne against the decision of Cotswold District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01994/FUL, dated 7 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is to replace existing roof lights with dormer window.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. During the course of the application, the appellant submitted an alternative scheme. Even so, the Council determined the application on the basis of the original plans. Also, I cannot be certain that interested parties were consulted on the alternative scheme. As such, I have also proceeded with the appeal on the basis of the scheme originally proposed.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of a non-designated heritage asset and whether or not the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Windrush Conservation Area ('CA').

Reasons

4. 'The Old Chapel' is a detached dwelling situated to the north of the main road that runs through the village of Windrush. This dwelling is constructed of natural stone with a slate roof and was converted from a former Methodist Chapel dating from the 19th Century.
5. The appeal site is located within both the Windrush CA and 'The Old Chapel' is also a non-designated heritage asset by virtue of its architectural and historic interest as a former Methodist Chapel. The appeal site is also within the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.
6. The Windrush CA largely extends over buildings associated with the village, including dwellings in various forms and a Norman Church. Most notably, the buildings within the Windrush CA are largely constructed of stone walls, with timber doors and fenestration with slate roofs. Overall, because of their architectural forms, materials and detailing they make a positive contribution to the special character and appearance of the CA.

7. The conversion of the former Methodist Chapel into a dwelling has largely retained its essential character. The single gabled form, with unbroken roof and the simple architectural design of the chapel still evidences the original use of the building, and are part of its significance and character as a non-designated heritage asset, which also makes a positive contribution to the significance, character and appearance of the Winchester CA.
8. To the east of the former Methodist Chapel was an attached subsidiary enclosure, believed to be used as stables for the visiting Methodist ministers. This enclosure had fallen into disrepair and was rebuilt as part of the conversion of the appeal property to a dwelling.
9. Subsequently, the former stables have been extended. However, the rear extension is generally of a lower height than the stables, incorporates limited openings and is largely concealed by the land levels associated with the site. Although, the former stables feature a chimney stack, this reflects the conversion of the former Methodist Chapel.
10. In particular, the rebuilt section to reflect the former stables, within which the proposed dormer is to be installed, is lower in height with limited openings and simpler in form to the former Methodist Chapel, which maintains a clear hierarchy between the buildings and evidences their historic uses and relationship. The subsidiary form, functional design and appearance of the rebuilt stable building is important in preserving its own character and special interest as well as that of the Chapel itself.
11. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 imposes a requirement that special attention should be paid to the desirability that the character or appearance of the conservation area should be preserved or enhanced. Paragraph 195 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') also requires me to assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset).
12. The Framework also says that: 'In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.'
13. The proposed dormer extension would replace the triple heritage roof light range on the north elevation of the dwelling. These roof lights are of a modest size and simple form. Also, the use of such roof lights is not uncommon in conservations areas as a means of allowing light without being particularly intrusive or overbearing. As such, these do not significantly alter the form of the rebuilt stables and retain a degree of consistency between this and the former Methodist Chapel building which also incorporates roof lights.
14. In contrast, the proposed dormer extension would comprise a timber door with a large central glazed section, set within a stone surround, behind a glazed balustrade with a pitched roof atop. Most notably, this extension projects off the roof but also extends vertically along the rear elevation of the rebuilt former stables.
15. Although some historic stable buildings had haylofts above, these would have usually been in the form of a door in the gable end on the building. Indeed, no

convincing evidence has been provided to indicate that such a hayloft door within a dormer would have once been a feature of this former stable building.

16. In particular, the proposed dormer extension would distort the existing clear simple arrangement between the roof form and rear wall of the former stables and this would make it particularly conspicuous. Furthermore, this would not reflect the arrangement of dormers in the area, which are generally located within roof forms of their respective buildings and above or close to the eaves.
17. For the above reasons, the proposal would harm the simple character of the existing former stables as well as harming the historic relationship between it and the former Methodist Chapel, particularly by introducing more complexity of design to the subsidiary of the two. As such, the proposal would cause harm to the building's overall significance as a non-designated heritage asset and diminish the positive contribution it currently makes to the significance, character and appearance of the Windrush CA.
18. The harm the proposal would cause to the significance of the Windrush CA would be less than substantial. Paragraph 202 of the Framework states that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. In this case there would appear to be no public benefits that would outweigh the less than substantial harm that I have identified.
19. Drawing on the above reasons, the proposal would be contrary to Policies EN2, EN10, EN11 and EN12 of the Cotswold District Plan. Together, these policies seek to secure high quality developments that respect the character and distinctive appearance of the locality, which also sustain and enhance the significance of designated heritage assets.

Conclusion

20. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Aqbal

INSPECTOR