



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 15 August 2023

by A Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 August 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/X2220/W/22/3306689

Stone Hall, The Street, Stourmouth, Kent CT3 1HY

- 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 Mr Collett against the decision of Dover District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00576, dated 4 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey rear extension.
-

Appeal B Ref: APP/X2220/Y/22/3306695

Stone Hall, The Street, Stourmouth, Kent CT3 1HY

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Collett against the decision of Dover District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00577, dated 4 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 July 2022.
 - The works proposed are the erection of single storey rear extension.
-

Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

3. As Appeal A relates to a planning permission and Appeal B relates to a listed building consent, I have had special regard to sections 66(1) and 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. The two appeals concern the same scheme under different, complementary legislation. To avoid duplication, I have dealt with both appeals together in my reasoning. Whilst I am aware that the site has some planning history, those other schemes are not before me for consideration.
5. I have used the Council's description of the proposal as this more accurately and concisely describes the proposed development and works.
6. As the modern extensions are physically attached to the historic core of the building they, by virtue of section 1(5)(a) of the Act, form part of the listed building. As such, I have considered the proposal to constitute development and works to the listed building, rather than within its setting, and have determined the appeals on this basis.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is whether the proposed development and works would preserve the Grade II listed building, Stonehall Farm (currently known as Stone Hall), or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

8. The appeal property is set within a large garden plot. It is a Grade II listed building¹ which features 15th century, 18th century and 21st century elements. Part of the building is timber framed and clad with red brick with flint and rubble at ground floor level.
9. Despite the extension and alteration of the listed building over time, the front elevation has maintained an aesthetically pleasing architectural form and those alterations have not unduly eroded the listed building's overall intrinsic heritage merit.
10. Based on the evidence before me, I find that the building's special interest and significance is largely derived from its architectural and historic interest as an illustration of a 15th century hall house with later alterations. Important contributors in these regards, which are pertinent to the appeal, are its surviving historic fabric, the use of traditional construction techniques and materials and the legibility of the historic core.

Appeal proposal and effects

11. The proposal would involve the erection of a single-storey rear extension. It would have a hipped roof to reflect the existing building and would be finished in brickwork and black weatherboard, both of which feature elsewhere within the property. Within the existing west elevation, two windows would be removed, with one providing an enlarged opening into the proposed extension.
12. I note from the evidence before me and my observations on site that the western addition to the existing building is a modern, 21st century, element. It projects forward of the building's historic principal western elevation. Despite being a later addition, and relatively large, the simple form and detailing of that established extension ensures that the historic part of the building remains an intact, prominent and legible feature. The proposed extension would compromise this, further extending the footprint of the building to the west and introducing a large expanse of glazing. In combination with the existing substantial extensions to the historic building, the proposal would begin to compete with the visual dominance of the main part of the building, harming its generally simple form and impairing its historic legibility. Taken together, the proposed development and works would harmfully erode the historic and architectural integrity of the listed building and would not conserve it in a manner appropriate to its significance.
13. Turning to the historic fabric of the building, the removal of the modern windows and small area of masonry would not be significant and would affect

¹ List Entry Number: 1203325

only a more recent phase of the dwelling. Nevertheless, this would not lessen the harm to the listed building's special interest and significance overall.

14. I acknowledge that the proposed extension has been designed with some sensitivity in a vernacular style, and with attention to materials and detailing. I also note that some detail could be controlled by condition. I accept that it would be subservient in appearance to the historic part of the property and later additions. I further note that the proposal would be set to the rear, largely out of sight from the public realm. However, the building is listed for its intrinsic architectural and historic interest and the visibility of the proposed development and works is not a determining factor in considering whether they would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the building. That the proposal would not affect the front or side elevations would not compensate for the identified harm or sufficiently justify the proposal.
15. I am also aware of the appellant's reference to the likelihood of the building once being much larger, particularly in respect of its footprint. This is not disputed by the Council. Nevertheless, and as acknowledged by the appellant, there is no evidence of this before me. Moreover, whilst I have noted the submitted floor areas, my assessment of the scheme has involved more than a simple reliance on the amount of ground covered by the proposal. Accordingly, these matters have not led me to an alternative conclusion on the main issue.
16. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the Grade II listed building, Stone Hall Farm, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, contrary to the requirements of sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act. Consequently, the proposal would harm the significance of this designated heritage asset.

Public benefits and balance

17. Paragraph 199 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development or works 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 or works within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
18. 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, attached to modern extensions, 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.
19. 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 very 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 that do not provide clear and convincing justification for allowing the appeal.

20. Conservation is an active process of managing change to heritage assets in ways that sustain, reveal or reinforce their heritage interests. I note the building's countryside location, which may attract differing user requirements to a more urban property. However, I am not persuaded that the scheme before me is fundamentally necessary to secure the optimum viable use of the building. Moreover, no substantive evidence has been put before me which verifies that the property would not be useable or viable as a dwelling or that its conservation as a designated heritage asset would be at risk if the appeals were to fail and the proposal, as submitted, was not implemented.
21. 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, Stone Hall, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, contrary to the requirements of section 16(2) and 66(1) of the Act and the relevant provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

22. I note that Stourmouth Parish Council have responded stating that it has no comments to make on the application. Nevertheless, this does not change my conclusion on the main issues.

Conclusion

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

A Price

INSPECTOR