



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 August 2023

by M Woodward BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/Y/23/3316118

8 High Street, Collyweston, Stamford PE9 3PW

- 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 & Mrs M McCabe against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NE/22/00595/LBC, dated 27 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2022.
 - The works proposed are conversion of existing outbuilding to annexe with a single storey front extension and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal lies in the Collyweston Conservation Area (CA) and relates to a Grade II listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. The Council's reason for refusal does not refer to the CA nor do they allege harm in this respect. However, given the site's location and my obligation under 72(1) of the Act, this is included as a main issue. The appellant addresses potential impacts on the CA in their appeal statement and I am satisfied that interested parties would not be unduly prejudiced by my approach.
4. According to the Council's officer report, a planning application¹ was refused at the same time as the listed building consent. However, no appeal against the planning application refusal has been made. As a result, this appeal deals only with the Council's decision to refuse listed building consent and the proposal as set out in the banner heading above.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, 'Church Cottage and Church Gate Cottage and Attached Outbuilding' (Ref: 1040126), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and whether the character or appearance of the Collyweston Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced.

¹ Planning application reference number - NE/22/00594/FUL

Reasons

6. The appeal outbuilding lies to the rear of two dwellings, Church Cottage and Church Gate Cottage, which also form part of the list entry. According to the list description, the building likely dates from the 18th century and is mainly constructed of rough squared, coursed limestone with a roof comprising Collyweston stone. An open-fronted element, which includes both traditional stone and modern roofing materials, projects forward from one side of the building's façade to create its L-shape.
7. The evidence indicates a variety of historic uses for the building, including agricultural, stabling and domestic storage, partly reflected by the way in which the building has been altered over time, including more recent additions such as rooflights, a dormer and a chimney stack. Despite these more recent interventions, when viewed as a whole, the appeal building conveys the appearance of an agricultural building and retains an inherently vernacular style, commensurate with its historic subservient function in relation to the main residential use.
8. Given the above, I find that the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated with its historic fabric and architectural and historic legibility as a vernacular outbuilding.
9. In respect of the CA, High Street is dominated by well-preserved traditional cottages and outbuildings. The rustic appearance of the appeal building is in keeping with the vernacular style of many of these outbuildings and contributes to its character as a historic rural village. Therefore, insofar as it relates to this appeal, it is the presence of well-preserved traditional buildings that are constructed from traditional materials which contribute to the significance of the CA.
10. The proposal would involve the erection of a lean-to extension which would link the building's main façade with the open-fronted projection. It would create a protruding element which would also enclose the open-fronted elevation with solid built form. Whilst relatively modest in scale, enlarging the building in this manner would disrupt its simple rectangular form, with the solid walling proposed obscuring the existing historic stone façade, which is currently visible through the elevation's open front.
11. In relation to fenestration, the works would replace the traditional timber doors in the building's façade with a window and door which, whilst utilising materials with a traditional style, would appear as modern domestic insertions, in comparison with the robust and understated doors which would be more befitting of buildings of this age and type.
12. The building's resultant domestication would be further emphasised by the insertion of timber framed glazed French doors and a casement window in the rear elevation of the building. Whilst the modern roofing materials associated with the existing projecting element would be replaced with sympathetic Collyweston stone, several conservation style rooflights would be inserted into this roof slope, further diminishing the building's understated appearance. When taken together, the works proposed would result in a building with an

overtly domestic character, at odds with its vernacular style and status as a traditional rural outbuilding.

13. I appreciate that several windows and doors to be inserted would replace modern materials which do not contribute to the building's special interest. However, the proposed insertion of a casement window in the rear elevation along with a rooflight in the roof slope would result in the limited loss of historic wall and roofing fabric, resulting in further harm.
14. Turning to the impact on the CA, there would be partial views of the converted building from the High Street despite its location to the rear of existing housing which fronts the street. Whilst dense vegetation and scrub occupies land to the rear of the building, largely screening views from the pedestrian access which links the nearby church to High Street, there is no guarantee that this would remain in perpetuity. Therefore, the harm to the building's traditional appearance that I have identified would be appreciable from within the CA, harming its historic rural village character. Therefore, the proposal would also be detrimental to the character and appearance of the CA.
15. Paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to its conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of the asset and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the character and appearance of the CA. I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
16. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings. I appreciate that the proposal would secure the long-term future of the building by bringing it into residential use. However, it is currently used for storage purposes and its continued use for such purposes is not dependent on the outcome of this appeal.
17. The additional floorspace created by the proposal would secure additional residential annexe accommodation for the appellant's family. However, these matters, to the extent that these could be considered public benefits, are not of sufficient weight to outweigh the identified harm.
18. Given the above and in the absence of sufficient public benefit, I conclude that the proposal would fail, on balance, to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the character and appearance of the Collyweston Conservation Area. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 199 of the Framework and would conflict with Policy 2 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (2016) which requires, amongst other matters, that proposals conserve heritage assets in a manner commensurate with their significance and complement the historic environment through form, scale, design and materials.

Other Matter

19. The appellant alleges that the Council did not engage with them effectively through the application process. However, this is a matter between the parties and has no bearing on my determination of this case, which has been assessed on its planning merits.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Woodward

INSPECTOR