



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 May 2024

by Helen O'Connor LLB MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/Y/23/3327989

1 Grigshot Cottages, Bath Road, Rooksmoor, North Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL5 5NE

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs C Timberlake against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref is S.23/1162/LBC.
 - The works proposed are the replacement of steel framed single-paned glass windows on the front of the building with aluminium framed, double paned glass windows that use the existing stone mullions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. In my heading above, and in the interests of brevity, I have summarised the description of development given on the application form.
3. The proposal seeks listed building consent to replace four windows in the front elevation of 1 Grigshot Cottages, part of a Grade II listed building situated within the Industrial Heritage Conservation Area (CA). Accordingly, I am mindful of the duties in sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the works on the significance of the Grade II listed building known as Grigshot Cottages (Listed Entry Number: 1340656) (the listed building) and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses; and whether the character or appearance of the CA would be preserved or enhanced.

Reasons

Significance and special interest

5. Grigshot cottages are a pair of mid 18th century cottages built in rubble limestone with a stone slate roof. Although later additions have been made to each, they are broadly symmetrical with the main body of the house comprising two storeys with an attic gable.
6. The form and detailing of the listed building reflect characteristics that typify vernacular architecture found in the Stroud valleys, which was heavily

influenced by the emerging cloth making industry. This includes the steep pitch of the roof and tall cross-gables that probably facilitated light and space for weaving. Stone mullion windows in the main body of the cottages are centrally aligned beneath the apex of the gable. The combination of fixed direct glazing, iron casements and leaded lights inset into the stone surrounds are consistent with local vernacular architecture.

7. Hence, the significance and special interest of Grigshot Cottages is in part derived from their architectural and aesthetic value as a good example of vernacular housing of the period. Further significance comes from the surviving historic fabric contained in the listed building. In addition, significance is found in what the cottages reveal about the social and economic evolution of the area, including its industrial legacy. Their configuration with Grigshot House and Grigshot Lodge as a historic grouping enhances this element of heritage value.
8. The appeal property is one of the pair that comprises Grigshot Cottages. It possesses the architectural characteristics described above. The position, proportions and detailing of the fenestration would have been an integral part of the original architecture and given the relative simplicity of its overall composition, an important and obvious feature.
9. The windows in the front elevation of 1 Grigshot Cottages include a two light mullioned attic bedroom window with one fixed directly glazed light and one opening metal casement. It has small square leaded lights containing some old glass¹, a swivel catch and an external quadrant stay. In the absence of evidence to show otherwise, it is probable that the attic window originates from the 18th century.
10. The first-floor window is a three light mullion window. The central light houses an opening iron casement flanked by two direct fixed panes that have a metal dividing bar. The almost full-length central casement has a monkey tail handle. The ground floor mullion window is broadly similar in arrangement, but the central light has a smaller opening casement to the top half with a catch, stay and monkey tail handle. In comparison to the attic window, these windows require larger panes of glass and have details that signal a probable alteration to the fenestration in the 19th century. That would be consistent with the progression of larger glass sheet production and its greater availability.
11. In combination, the traditional windows described reinforce no.1's architectural integrity and evolution and contain elements of surviving historic fabric. Furthermore, the windows at ground and first floor are broadly similar to those in the front of the adjoining cottage. As such, they are an important component of the listed building's special interest and significance.
12. The kitchen window in the later side extension to the appeal property is a timber framed casement window of relatively modern construction. Whilst inoffensive, there is no evidence to suggest it contributes in any meaningful way to the heritage value of the listed building.
13. The CA covers large linear areas that encompass the buildings, transport infrastructure, watercourses and valley landscapes that facilitated the cloth making industry in and around Stroud. It reflects how the relationship between

¹ Page 8, Appellant's Statement of Case

the built and natural environment in this part of the country enabled the production of wool and cloth, and how that evolved over time. Increasing technological advances resulted in an industrialised scale of production, with its inherent transport infrastructure and associated industries. The cloth making industry heavily influenced the distinctive vernacular architecture and built form, which ranges from mill workers or weavers' cottages to mansion houses and commercial mills.

14. Therefore, the significance and special interest of the CA as a whole is drawn, in part, from the architectural quality and appearance of its vernacular buildings, underpinned by a coherent use of limited materials and detailing. This encompasses the design of traditional windows.
15. The architectural form and detailing evident in the frontage of the appeal site, including its traditional windows, provide a good example of local vernacular architecture. As such, it makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA as a whole, and therefore, to its significance as a designated heritage asset.

The effect on the listed building and CA

16. The proposed works would introduce four aluminium framed double-glazed replacement windows in the front elevation of no.1. The window schedule provided² shows the dimensions of the glazed units and shows opening and fixed casements. It is proposed that they would utilise the existing mullion stone window apertures in the main body of the house. The details provided show a central glazing bar for each of the casement units.
17. The proposal would result in the removal of existing traditional windows serving the ground floor living room, first floor bedroom and attic room. Consequently, any surviving historic fabric in the frames, opening mechanisms, catches or glass would be lost, thereby diminishing the historic significance of the listed building.
18. Moreover, the proposed window design for the attic window would be obviously different from the present window which features leaded lights. In addition, the proposed sealed doubled glazed units would have a frame. This would depart from the appearance of the direct fixed panes evident in the existing traditional windows. Although limited details of the proposed replacement windows are provided, based on the opening casement frames shown in the window schedule, they would appear thicker by comparison to the existing slender frames of the opening casements.
19. Furthermore, given that they would be sealed double glazed units, it is likely that the horizontal glazing bar would be applied to the casement, rather than being an integral component. Consequently, they would lack authenticity in functional and visual terms and would further emphasise the disparity with the existing historic windows.
20. Accordingly, I cannot agree that there would be no visual difference arising from the proposals. Rather, by comparison, the replacement windows would have a heavier and cruder profile. Owing to their uniformity and materials, they would have a manufactured and modern appearance. In combination these factors would undermine important and obvious features of the architectural

² Albany Windows dated 26.10.22

composition of no.1 and would detract from the overall quality and architectural integrity of its frontage. They would also contrast harmfully with the traditional windows in the frontage of the adjoining cottage.

21. The replacement of the modern kitchen window would have a largely neutral impact, given that it is not an important part of the significance of the listed building.
22. Nevertheless, overall, the proposed replacement windows would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building, leading to conflict with section 16(2) of the Act.
23. In terms of the effect on the CA, the displacement of historic windows that make a positive contribution with non-authentic fenestration would dilute its heritage value. Consequently, albeit to a small degree, the works would fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the CA as a whole. Conflict would therefore also arise with section 72(1) of the Act.
24. The appellant indicates that the proposals are her preferred choice but indicates some flexibility as to materials, colour and other approaches to replacement windows. Be that as it may, I am required to consider the proposals that were the subject of the application on their merits.
25. It is suggested that the removed windows could be stored on site or donated to a museum. However, such an approach would still involve the removal of historic fabric from its intended position. Part of their architectural and aesthetic significance derives from their physical position in situ as a feature of the listed building as an entity.
26. It follows that the works would cause harm to the significance of both the listed building and the CA as designated heritage assets. In the terminology of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and cognisant of the relatively minor nature of the proposals, this would cause less than substantial harm in both instances. In these circumstances, paragraph 208 of the Framework indicates that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.

Heritage balance

27. Paragraph 205 of the Framework indicates that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets, whereas paragraph 206 states that any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, should require clear and convincing justification.
28. The appellant emphasises the poor condition of the historic windows, which includes cracked glass, corrosion, pitted paintwork and loose hinges and catches. Concerns are outlined regarding the ingress of water, draughts, excessive condensation, and the safety of opening mechanisms. Reference is made to improvements to the quality of life of the occupants of the appeal site that would result from the proposed replacement windows. This includes better thermal efficiency, draught proofing, sound insulation from traffic noise and security associated with upgraded windows.
29. Although the primary benefit from the works would be experienced by the occupants of no.1, and therefore predominantly private, I accept that in general terms some public benefits would be derived from investment into the

fabric of the listed building to provide comfortable living accommodation for existing and future occupiers. Furthermore, although not quantified, there would be wider environmental public benefits associated with the improved energy efficiency of the building.

30. Paragraph 164 of the Framework outlines the encouragement given by the Government to supporting energy efficiency improvements to existing buildings. Even so, it confirms that where proposals would affect conservation areas and listed buildings, the heritage policies set out in the Framework are still applicable.
31. There is little convincing evidence before me to indicate that the proposed replacement windows would be the only way of securing such public benefits. The appellant contends it would be less costly and time-consuming to replace the windows and states that this is her preference. However, in the absence of substantive evidence to show otherwise, I am not persuaded that a concerted attempt has been made to explore other potentially less harmful options, including repair in combination with other measures that could address or alleviate problems of thermal efficiency, noise impact, security or safety. This tempers the amount of positive weight attributed to these public benefits.
32. My approach is broadly consistent with advice given by Historic England in their 'Historic England Advice Note 2 - Making Changes to Heritage Assets'. Paragraph 15 states, amongst other things, that windows are frequently key to the significance of a building. Replacement is therefore generally advisable only where the original is beyond repair, it minimises the loss of historic fabric and matches the original in detail and material. Secondary glazing is usually more appropriate and more likely to be feasible than double-glazing where the window itself is of significance.
33. Even if neighbours and the parish council have no objections to the proposal, the absence of objections does not of itself amount to a public benefit.
34. The appellant points out that modern double-glazed windows have been used at Dudbridge Mill, the Rooksmoor Mills development including 36 Rooksmoor Mills and Woodchester Garage amongst others. My attention is drawn to an instance of where the Council has given consent for replacement double glazed windows at Rooksmoor House, a Grade II* listed building.
35. Limited information is provided in relation to the specific proposals in those cases and the significance of the respective buildings as heritage assets. This hinders a comparison with the appeal works, but based on the available information there is no indication that they involved the removal of traditional windows similar to those in the appeal property. On that basis, it is not convincingly shown that any is directly comparable.
36. In relation to Rooksmoor House, the Council explains that they concluded that the windows to be replaced in that case did not contribute to the special interest of the building but rather caused it harm. Accordingly, on the available evidence, this would differentiate it with the scheme before me.
37. The significance of individual heritage assets and the special interest of listed buildings in particular, will differ given that each one is unique. Hence, it does not follow that what may be acceptable in one instance will always be acceptable for others. Consequently, whilst I have taken these examples into

account in general terms, they carry little weight in favour of the specific works in this case.

38. Overall, I attribute the sum of public benefits associated with the proposal moderate weight in its favour, but this is insufficient to outweigh the great weight arising from the harm to designated heritage assets identified. Conflict therefore arises with the historic environment protection policies in the Framework.
39. Furthermore, although there is no requirement to determine listed building consent applications in accordance with the development plan, it is material that the proposal would run counter to policy ES10 of the Stroud District Local Plan, November 2015 which generally seeks to preserve, protect or enhance the historic environment.

Conclusion

40. I find that the works would result in unjustified harm to the listed building and CA and so would conflict with the statutory provisions set out in the Act, the historic environment policies within the Framework, as well as the heritage policy in the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Helen O'Connor

INSPECTOR