



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 April 2024

by C McDonagh BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M9496/Y/23/3335965

Biggin Grange, Liffs Road, Biggin, Buxton SK17 0DJ

- 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 Mr and Mrs R Henry against the decision of Peak District National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref is NP/DDD/0723/0782.
 - The works proposed are removal of cement render and repointing of walling stone.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. On 19 December 2023, the Government released an updated version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). As the changes do not affect the consideration of the main issue of this appeal, I have not sought comments on the revisions.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the Grade II listed building or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

4. The appeal building is the Grade II listed¹ 'Biggin Grange and Attached Garden Wall', which is a two-storey farmhouse of late 18th Century origin. There is a later addition to the rear and a number of associated outbuildings of similar character and construction.
5. The listing description details the farmhouse's limestone construction, gritstone dressings and quoins, and a slate roof with leaded ridge. The side and rear elevations include a coating of cement render, the removal of which is subject to this appeal, which was evidently applied in the 1990s as a remedial measure.
6. From all that I have seen and read, including the submitted 'Statement of Heritage Significance', the special interest and significance of the listed building is derived predominantly from its historic and architectural interests. Historic interest is drawn from the building's age and its intrinsic ties to a former monastery which dated to the 12th century and evidently stood on or near to

¹ List Entry Number: 1334893

the appeal site. The monastic order farmed the land, and the existing farmhouse is believed to have been built hundreds of years after the dissolution of the monasteries in the area in the 1500s to continue the farming operations at the site. The evolution and development of the area is apparent in the perceived high status of the building. Architectural interest is drawn from the traditional construction and materials, such as the limestone and gritstone seen widely in the area. The attached gardens add further significance and grandeur to the property, while there is also a sense of hierarchy relative to the order of the farmhouse and outbuildings.

7. There is general agreement that the cement render adds little to the special interest or significance of the listed building. I see no reason to disagree based on my observations at the site visit. From a purely aesthetic perspective, the render is not particularly pleasing to the eye, particularly when viewed amongst the unrendered elevations of the house and the walls of the various outbuildings.
8. The proposal to remove the render would expose the stonework underneath which would then be repointed using an appropriate lime mortar mix. My attention is drawn to guidance from Historic England on this matter which advises that *'the removal of hard renders may cause more damage to the significance of the building than retention. Such treatments are unlikely to be considered as repairs and would normally require listed building consent.'*
9. The dispute between the parties is centred around whether the render can be removed without causing harm to the building and the potential loss of historic fabric in the form of the render. I note the appellant agrees that there is a limited risk of damage from the proposed works, although they assert that the works would ultimately enhance the outward appearance and historic interest by revealing the stonework beneath. This may well be the case.
10. However, any damage to the stonework would be irreversible and undoubtedly diminish the special interest of the listed building. This is particularly concerning as there are very few details before me to substantiate how this would be done, other than a few cursory references to repointing and care while removing the render.
11. It is imperative that proposals are accompanied by supporting information of the requisite detail to illustrate and/or describe the proposed works in order to avoid any uncertainty over the extent of what is proposed, and to allow a robust assessment of any consequent effects. The lack of detailed information is highly undesirable in general terms, but especially given that the property is a Grade II listed building located in a National Park.
12. As per Section 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), I must have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Moreover, as the relevant authority I must seek to further the purposes of the National Park; of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of these areas and promoting opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas by the public².

² National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 (as amended by the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023)

13. Based on the limited evidence before me, and bearing in mind Historic England guidance on this matter, I cannot be sure that there would not be harm caused to the stone beneath, which is asserted to be of benefit to expose, or knock on consequences such as water ingress.
14. I am informed that other buildings at Biggin Grange may have had their external render removed previously without issue. Again, I have nothing before me to indicate whether this was done with the necessary consents, but this does not justify the lack of information before me with regards to this appeal.
15. Therefore, in giving considerable importance and weight to the preservation of the building, I conclude that it has not been satisfactorily demonstrated that the proposed works would meet the requirements of section 16(2) of the Act. Nor can I be sure that it would not harm the significance of this designated heritage asset and thus comply with the provisions within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

16. My attention is drawn to a planning application³ approved by the National Park Authority in 2016 which was approved retrospectively for the removal of render on the front elevation of a property known as Lawson Cottage. I have been provided with the officer report for that application, although those works would have had their own site-specific circumstances which led to their approval. They were also carried out without the initial required consent. In any event, this does not mean that the lack of justification or methodology for the proposal before me is acceptable as each case is assessed on its own merits.
17. It is asserted that the removal of render and replacement on a like for like basis would not attract the requirement for listed building consent. It is not my role to establish this in the context of a Section 20 appeal, and I am not aware of an application under Section 26 of the Act for a certificate of lawfulness of proposed works to a listed building.
18. I note there was some confusion as to the consultation response of the Parish Council to the application for listed building consent. While their support is noted, this offers little weight in favour of the scheme.

Conclusion

19. In conclusion, I cannot be certain that the proposal would preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed building, and it would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the Framework. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C McDonagh

INSPECTOR

³ Reference: DDD/1017/1064