
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 April 2025

by **L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/U2750/Y/25/3361426

5 Cornforth Hill, Richmond, DL10 4RR

- 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 John Clarke against the decision of North Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref is ZD24/00413/LBC.
 - The works proposed are re-roofing, re-pointing of chimney stack, replacement of rainwater goods.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. whether the proposal would preserve the grade II listed 4 and 5, Cornforth Hill or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Richmond Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property forms half of the grade II listed 4 and 5, Cornforth Hill (Nos 4 & 5), which is a pair of two storey cottages within the Richmond Conservation Area (CA).
4. Nos 4 & 5 are constructed from coursed rubble and are roughly symmetrical with central front doors under flat arches, gable end chimney stacks and sash windows. The listed building sits in an elevated position on the steeply rising Cornforth Hill and forms part of an attractive traditional street scene. Although the listing description refers to the roof being finished in Welsh slate, the roof of the appeal property is covered with Hadrow concrete rooftiles. However, these rooftiles are clearly of some age, well weathered and give a similar appearance to stone when viewed from distance. Insofar as is relevant to this case, the significance of Nos 4 & 5 is founded on its architectural interest, particularly its construction from traditional materials, its traditional architectural detailing and its prominent positioning.
5. The CA covers much of the central core of Richmond. It includes a rich variety of mainly C18/19 buildings many in the Georgian style partly arranged around a core medieval street pattern. Hills and open spaces, particularly the open space along the riverside add interest to the townscape and connect the built-up environment with the surrounding countryside. The traditional buildings are mainly constructed from a palette of locally sourced materials which provides a degree of consistency between buildings and is integral to the overall character and appearance of the

CA. Insofar as is relevant to this appeal the significance of the CA is derived from the arrangement, form and finish of the traditional architecture within it and its relationship with the surrounding countryside.

6. Both parties agree that works which would involve re-pointing the chimney stack, replacement rainwater goods and a replacement rooflight subject to the imposition of conditions where necessary would not harm the significance of either the CA or the listed building such that both heritage assets would be preserved. I agree, in my view, these elements would have a neutral effect on both designated heritage assets.
7. However, the proposal also seeks to re-roof the appeal property including replacing the Hadrow concrete roof tiles with reclaimed Welsh slate. The roof of Nos 4 & 5 is highly prominent, and its roof is a proportionally large component of what are relatively simple modest cottages. Thus, in my view, any significant changes to the roof is highly sensitive in terms of its effect on the listed building given its significance as described above.
8. Whilst the use of Welsh slate is referenced in the original listing description the existing Hadrow roof tiles are clearly of some age. The overall well weathered appearance of the existing roof complements the local stone used in the building's facade and the palette of materials used throughout the CA. Any reclaimed Welsh slates and any matching ridge tiles could vary in size and colour significantly. There are no specific details of the actual materials proposed to be used and their detailed process of installation, particularly, the roof finish at the various junctures where the tiles would meet different components of the listed building.
9. Furthermore, it is also unclear exactly how the existing roof would be removed, and the new roof would be installed. Whilst I note the assurance of the appellant, with the absence of detailed evidence on the existing roof components underneath the existing roof tiles I cannot be certain that the replacement roof would not involve the loss of or damage to historic fabric associated with the listed building.
10. Paragraph 207 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) clearly states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance.
11. Thus, without detailed visual and construction information, I cannot be certain that the proposed roof would not harm the significance of the listed building. If not done sensitively, I cannot be satisfied that the proposed roof replacement would not erode the traditional character of the listed building or appear incongruous, thus harming the significance of the heritage asset. Furthermore, as I cannot be sure there would be no harm to a prominent traditional building in the CA, it follows that I also cannot be satisfied the proposal would not harm the significance, character or appearance of the CA.
12. Moreover, without a detail method statement of exactly how the works would be carried out, including full details of the existing roof components to be removed and replaced I cannot be satisfied the proposal would not result in the loss of or damage to historic fabric.

13. For these reasons, given the great weight I must give to the conservation of the designated heritage assets, I must therefore take a precautionary approach and find the proposed replacement roof would erode the simple and modest traditional architectural features of the grade II listed building. The proposals would therefore fail to preserve and harm the designated heritage asset. Consequently, it follows, that the harm to a traditional building prominently positioned within the CA, would also fail to preserve the character and appearance of the CA harming its significance as a whole.
14. The harm to the listed building and the CA combined would be less than substantial and towards the lower end of any range. However, it is still of considerable importance and weight. In these circumstances, the Framework states that the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the scheme, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.

Planning and Heritage Balance

15. The proposals may improve the thermal efficiency of the appeal dwelling and avoid any water ingress there may be which would assist in avoiding any damage to the historic fabric of the listed building and improve the living conditions for the occupiers. I also acknowledge the economic benefits of construction. However, overall, any public benefits there may be, are clearly modest and would be insufficient to outweigh the great weight I must attach to the harm I have identified to the designated heritage assets.
16. For the reasons given and with the absence of detailed evidence to the contrary, I must find the scheme would harm the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed Nos 3 & 4 and would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA. Thus, the scheme conflicts with paragraphs 212 and 215 of the Framework. It also fails to accord with Core Policy 12 of the Richmondshire Core Strategy Local Plan (2014) which seeks to avoid harm to the character and appearance of an area and heritage assets.

Other Matters

17. In reaching these conclusions I have noted the comments with regard to the Council's handling of the proposals. I also note that the appeal property is in good order which in part is due to it being carefully maintained. However, I have had regard only to the planning and heritage merits of the case, and none of these other matters are sufficient to outweigh my earlier findings.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR