



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2026

by **N Kempton BA(Hons) PGDip MA IHBC MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th July 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/Y/25/3373701

14 Ford Village, Ford, Berwick-Upon-Tweed, Northumberland TD15 2QG

- 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 Ford and Etal Estates against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01028/LBC.
 - The works proposed are installation of an insulation system, removal of lath, plaster wall lining together with other associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal concerns works to a listed building. As required by sections 16(2) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
3. In my determination of the appeal, I have had regard to the development plan policies cited on the Council's decision notice where material. However, I am not obliged to determine the appeal in accordance with them.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would:
 - preserve the grade II listed building, 14 Ford Village¹ and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Reasons

Special interest and significance of the listed building

5. The appeal relates to 14 Ford Village, a modest cottage, which dates from the mid-19th century and is located within the planned estate village of Ford. The special interest and significance of this grade II listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, primarily derives from being a good example of the traditional estate housing in Ford, associated with the family of Louisa Beresford, Marchioness of Waterford. Furthermore, the cottage, which is single storey with three bays and a slightly projecting cross-gabled bay, is of traditional construction. It has a Welsh slate roof, with a brick ridge stack. The cottage features a central panelled door

¹ 14 Ford Village List entry number: 1042156.

with overlight and stone hoodmould, which is flanked by traditional two-light windows. The buildings' historic fabric, including random rubble walls and ashlar dressings, and internal walls, which are finished with lath and plaster, display traditional building techniques and materials.

The effect of the proposal on the listed building

6. The proposed works would result in the removal of traditional lath and plaster from the internal face of the external walls in the cottage, which contributes to the building's special interest. Furthermore, the works would involve the removal, alteration and refitting of doors, sill boards, skirting boards and architraves as well and the removal and refitting of radiators. The loss of this traditionally constructed wall lining and associated works would constitute the loss of historic fabric.
7. For these reasons, the works would result in harm to the significance of the listed building. It would fail to preserve the listed building and any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The proposed intention to retain the existing plaster on the internal walls, would not overcome the harm identified.
8. It is accepted that the proposed internal wall insulation would not be harmful in the kitchen, which is a later extension, or the bathroom. These rooms can accommodate a greater degree of change without harm to the assets' significance.
9. Notwithstanding the size of the building, or that the proposed internal wall insulation system would encroach the current wall thickness by 15mm, it is not considered that the loss of floorspace would be disproportionate. There is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the reduction in internal floorspace would deter prospective tenants. Therefore, the resultant reduction in the area of internal floorspace is not a determining factor.
10. I find that there would be less than substantial harm, towards the lower end of the scale, in relation to the significance of the designated heritage asset, but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. This harm must be considered in the context of paragraph 212 of the Framework, which establishes that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset.

Public benefits and planning balance

11. The appellant contends that excessive heating and running costs are deterring prospective tenants, stating that the tenancy has remained vacant for two years. This may be so, however, no substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate this, such as: tenant satisfaction survey data; or prospective tenant feedback, or similar. Furthermore, there is no substantive evidence before me to rule out other factors that may be deterring prospective tenants, such as rental values or letting arrangements. The appellant does however, acknowledge the property condition, specifically issues with damp and condensation and sets out the intention to modernise the interior. Consequently, determining why the tenancy remains vacant is inconclusive. Despite these matters, it is agreed by both main parties that the cottage was latterly occupied by the same tenant for 30 years.
12. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposal would be beneficial because it would enhance amenity, improve energy efficiency and consequently reduce energy bills, which would be attractive to prospective tenants. These are primarily

private benefits. The marginal public benefits, in terms of the provision of a unit of rented accommodation with good living conditions, improved thermal performance and reduced carbon emissions attract no more than moderate weight in favour of the appeal, they are not sufficient to outweigh the harm I have identified.

13. It is acknowledged that loft insulation has previously been installed in the building and would be upgraded as part of the proposed works.
14. The appellant has determined that the relative benefit of installing secondary glazing would be extremely low and disregarded its use on the basis that it would detract from the buildings' group value within the estate. However, based on the evidence before me, it has not been demonstrated that secondary glazing could not be installed without being visually discernible externally. Similarly, the appellant has disregarded the installation of floor insulation due to the level of intervention required weighed against the little gain in thermal performance, though this has not been evidenced.
15. Notwithstanding this, there is a little substantive evidence that the same benefits could not be achieved by less harmful intervention, or alternative, reversible works, which may mitigate, in part, harm to the designated heritage asset and avoid unduly prejudicing options for the future.
16. In any event, it has not been demonstrated that viable use of the appeal building as a residential dwelling is dependent on the proposal.
17. The appeal building was designed for residential use. Albeit currently vacant, residential use remains the optimum viable use. Whether the proposed insulation system is installed or not, will have no significant impact on the buildings' use.
18. As such, the proposed works would be contrary to the following policies of the Northumberland Local Plan (2022): Policy ENV 1 which is a strategic policy requiring the protection and enhancement of the historic and built environment; Policy ENV 7 (1) which is clear that development proposals will be assessed, and decisions made, that ensure the conservation and enhancement of the significance, quality and integrity of Northumberland's heritage assets and their settings.

Conclusion

19. I conclude that the proposed works would fail to preserve the special architectural or historic interest of the grade II listed building. Therefore, the proposal would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 215 of the Framework, and development plan policy insofar as relevant.
20. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Kempton

INSPECTOR