The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 August 2020

by Jillian Rann BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/Y/20/3251737
Harracles Mill Cottage, Dunwood Road, Rudyard ST13 8RG

- 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 Taylor against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
- The application Ref SMD/2019/0505, dated 9 August 2019, was refused by notice dated 30 October 2019.
- The works proposed are erection of single storey rear extension.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and listed building consent is granted for erection of single storey rear extension at Harracles Mill Cottage, Dunwood Road, Rudyard ST13 8RG in accordance with the terms of the application Ref SMD/2019/0505 dated 9 August 2019 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. Whilst listed building consent was sought by the appellants and this appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent, the appellants' submissions originally sought to challenge the listed status of the appeal building, specifically with regard to whether it was within the curtilage of the grade II listed building known as Harracles Mill.

3. However, the appellants have subsequently confirmed that they do not wish to proceed with that argument. I have therefore disregarded that specific argument and evidence pertaining to it. Consequently, having regard to section 1(5) of the Act, I have considered the appeal on the basis that the appeal building is listed. The site is also in a conservation area. I am mindful of my statutory duties under sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Act and have considered the appeal accordingly.

4. The Council's decision was based on a revised drawing submitted during the course of the application. The revisions included a reduction in the length and an increase in the height of the extension compared to that originally proposed and changes to the materials. For the avoidance of doubt, my decision is based on the revised proposal as shown on Sketch Proposal Part Ground Floor Plan + Elevations drawing number 2019-2422-02 (no revision reference). Interested parties have been notified of the revised drawing and given the opportunity to

comment on it as part of the appeal process. I am therefore satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by my having dealt with the appeal on the basis of that revised drawing.

5. Since the application was refused, the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan (the Local Plan) has been adopted, on 9 September 2020. The Council has confirmed that the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (the Core Strategy) is no longer applicable and that Policy DC2 of the Local Plan replaces Policy DC2 of the Core Strategy which is referred to in its reason for refusal. I have considered the appeal accordingly.

6. In the appeal submissions, the site address is referred to as both Dunwood Road and Dunwood Lane. Nonetheless, it is clear from the submitted plans which site and building the appeal relates to and I have considered the appeal accordingly. For the avoidance of doubt, in the banner heading and in my decision, I have used the address given on the application form, which is consistent with the address on the appeal form and that stated on the Council's decision notice.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the special interest of the grade II listed building and on the character or appearance of the Rudyard Conservation Area (RCA).

Reasons

8. Harracles Mill is a grade II listed corn mill which was historically part of the Harracles Hall estate. The evidence indicates that the existing building dates from the 19th century, although there appears to have been a mill on the site since at least the late 18th century. The Mill ceased operation in around the 1930s and remains out of use today.

9. As part of its curtilage is the appeal building, a former barn which was converted to a dwelling in around 1989/90. The appeal building has been altered over the years. However, the evidence indicates that it is likely to date from around the turn of the 19th century and historically it seems to have formed part of the wider complex of buildings which form a small cluster around Harracles Mill.

10. Since its conversion to residential use, the appeal building has been extended at first floor level to one side, where a structure of similar height appears to have existed historically. It also has a single storey extension to the rear, with glazed doors opening onto a small patio. As part of its conversion to residential use the building has also been subject to other alterations. Those include the insertion of domestic window openings and the addition of chimneys.

11. As a result of those alterations and the enclosed, landscaped garden area alongside it, the appeal building now has a degree of domesticity to its appearance. However, evidence of its historic use, appearance and form nonetheless remains. That includes evidence of the barn's historic openings which are partly blocked up but can still be made out, particularly in the elevation facing its access drive. The linear form of the former agricultural building also remains evident and well-preserved.

12. Therefore, whilst its character and appearance have changed and reflect its current residential use, the building nonetheless retains its legibility as an historic agricultural structure.

13. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, the special interest of the appeal building is drawn from its historic interest as a former rural structure within the Mill complex. It also derives historic and architectural interest from those elements of its historic fabric, form and detailing which remain as evidence of its former agricultural use.

14. Taking the elevation facing the building's access drive as the front, the proposed extension would be to the rear, alongside the existing single storey extension to that side of the building. The extension would cover a section of the former barn's historic walling. However, that section of wall would be retained within the extension. Therefore, the works would not result in the loss of historic fabric or detailing which remain within that wall.

15. The extension would add to the width and massing of the existing single storey extension. However, it would still be set in some distance from the side of the adjoining, taller two storey part of the historic building, and set down below its eaves. Consequently, even taken cumulatively with that existing extension, it would remain subservient and would not unduly dominate or overwhelm the rear elevation of the historic building.

16. As the extension would be set in from the side of the retained two storey section of the appeal building, a large section of the remaining historic walling to the former barn's rear elevation would still be visible alongside it. That would include the distinctive quoin detailing to its corner, similar to that which remains evident on the other side of the existing extension. The building's historic detailing and linear alignment would thus remain legible.

17. The glazing to the rear elevation of the extension would be framed in timber, a traditional material sympathetic to the rural character of the former agricultural building. With a tiled roof, stone side wall and quoin detailing alongside the rear glazing, the extension's materials and detailing would reflect those of the existing building. In that context and given its relatively limited scale, the glazing to its rear elevation would not appear discordant or erode the legibility of the historic building. The proposed rooflight would be similar in size, appearance and spacing to those in the existing rear extension and would not appear cluttered or incongruous in the context of those existing features.

18. Drawing those threads together, the extension would not cause harm to the special interest of the appeal building.

19. The appeal building is already in residential use and has a relatively large adjoining garden. It therefore has a degree of domesticity to its appearance and its immediate surroundings. The extension would add to the building's domestic footprint but would not further erode its remaining agricultural character. Consequently, I am also satisfied that the works would preserve the wider surroundings of Harracles Mill itself.

20. The RCA covers a large area, encompassing Rudyard Lake and the settlement of Rudyard itself, together with other peripheral clusters of buildings such as that which includes the appeal site. This particular small complex of buildings can be glimpsed from Dunwood Lane. In those views it is seen in the context of

the water meadows and other watercourses associated with Harracles Mill and also in its wider rural surroundings, against the backdrop of the rising open land which slopes up towards Harracles Hall beyond. The remaining elements of the appeal building's historic agricultural character and appearance and its visual proximity and relationship to the other buildings within this historic complex around Harracles Mill contribute to the significance of the RCA.

21. The extension would be visible in those glimpsed views which exist from Dunwood Lane. From those vantage points it would be seen at some distance away, but in the wider context of the cluster of buildings around Harracles Mill and against the backdrop of the rising rural land beyond. However, the building already has a degree of domesticity to its appearance. The extension would add to that but, for the reasons given, not to a degree which would further erode the remaining agricultural form or character of the historic barn, including in views from Dunwood Lane. Nor would the extension have a notable prominence in views along the access road which the appeal building shares with Harracles Mill or adversely affect such views through the RCA towards the cluster of buildings. Therefore, the works would not harm the character or appearance of the RCA.

22. Given the above, I conclude that the proposal would not harm the special interest of the grade II listed building or the character or appearance of the RCA. It would therefore not conflict with Policy DC2 of the Local Plan, which states that the Council will conserve heritage assets and ensure that proposals contribute positively to the character of the historic environment. Nor would it conflict with the Framework, which requires heritage assets to be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Conditions

23. As the formal decision above references the plans submitted with the application, a condition specifying the approved plans is not necessary. Nor is a condition requiring the proposed rooflight to be omitted from the works, since I have found that aspect of the proposal acceptable.

24. Conditions requiring details of the facing materials and pointing, and a sample panel to demonstrate the intended wall construction, together with detailed joinery plans and sections for the windows and doors, including details of the rooflight, are all necessary to ensure that the appearance and construction of the extension is to an appropriately high standard. I have amended the wording of the suggested conditions in some respects, for preciseness.

Conclusion

25. For the reasons given I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Jillian Rann
INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this consent.
2) No works shall commence until details and samples of all external facing materials have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The relevant works shall be carried out in accordance with the details thereby approved.
3) No works shall commence until a sample panel of the external facing masonry work has been provided on site and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The sample panel shall show the proposed walling materials, masonry block size, coursing structure, mortar mix and pointing, written details of each of which shall also be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority before works commence. All pointing shall be of a strength and style appropriate to the type of walling materials used and shall not include 'tuck', 'strap' or 'recessed' pointing. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the details and sample panel thereby approved. The approved sample panel shall be retained on site for the duration of the works and shall not be removed until the external walls of the extension hereby approved are completed.
4) No works shall commence until detailed joinery plans and sections of the proposed frame structure and glazing to all openings, at a scale of 1:5, 1:10 or 1:20 as appropriate, and details of the frame materials and finishes to all openings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Those plans shall include details of the side window, the window/glazing to the rear (north west) elevation and the rooflight to the extension. The works shall be carried out in accordance with the details thereby approved.