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9 The Square, Carr Bank, Oakamoor

Oakamoor Conservation Area and Article 4 Direction

The property is situated at the end of a terrace fronting onto the River Churnet. It is part of the three earliest terraces of mill-workers housing shown on the Farley Township map dated 1844. They were built by Thomas Patten as a planned area of housing for workers at the wire mill and brass works between 1793 and 1810, prior to the construction of the canal. The terraces had uniform, characterful detailing, built in the Picturesque style. The character appraisal notes that each property had long front gardens with outhouse and privy with good surviving details at Nos.1, 5 & 7. The appraisal notes that there has been some alterations and rebuilding which has obscured some original features.

The distinctive character of the uniform terraces has been eroded by incremental changes such as changes to windows and doors, loss of boundary walls and outbuildings. Loss of historic detailing across the whole Conservation Area was highlighted in the character appraisal and resulted in the serving of an Article 4 Direction. It notes that the uniform and repeated architectural details and rhythm of terraces and frontages is easily spoilt by ad-hoc alteration. The character of the worker's terraced housing is particularly under threat.

Proposal

The application relates to the rear yard of No.9 The Square (at the north-western end and one of the largest). This fronts a pedestrian passageway running across all of the terrace and significant features include the repetition of brick walls with stone copings and brick and tile outbuildings at right-angles to the terraces. This detailing has clearly been uniform in the past but some alteration has occurred, including the loss of some pitched roofs to the outbuildings (although the retention of the lower sections has retained the uniformity of this rhythmical detail) and some loss of yard walls with stone coping. However, despite these piecemeal alterations sufficient detailing survives to understand and appreciate this estate building terrace which contributes to the character of the terrace and views within the area. Evidence of greater harm to outbuildings and rear yards can be seen at 10-17 The Square.

The rear yard of No.9 has already been impacted with a low brick lean-too with corrugated roof resting on the boundary wall and replacing earlier historic detailing (which the brick outline suggests may have been a lower lean-too roof). However, because this is relatively low you are able to look across it and it doesn't obscure detailing beyond. The yard brick wall and stone coping survives beyond the lean-too. The application proposes the raising of the height of the lean-too so that its upper edge will sit just below the first floor window cills, and will rise from just under the eaves of the adjoining outbuilding; replacing the corrugated sheet with Sandtoft 20/20 clay tiles and extending the roof across the whole of the rear yard. Three rooflights will be installed and a door inserted in the end.

I consider that the extension of the lean-too roof, raising its height and loss of the historic yard wall will be harmful to the detailing of the building. It will also enlarge the structure visually which will jar with the scale and rhythm of other walls and outbuildings fronting the passage. The junction between the new lean too and the neighbours outbuilding will be a particularly awkward detail. Whilst the replacement of the corrugated sheet is to be welcomed, the tile specified does not replicate a traditional blue clay tile. It is important to retain historic detailing to this early terrace of workers' cottage to preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Less than substantial harm to character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

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