The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 28 January 2014
Site visit made on 28 January 2014

by Richard McCoy BSc MSc DipTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11 March 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/H1033/E/13/2196474
Meeting House, Low Leighton Road, New Mills, High Peak SK22 4LS

- 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 Mrs Kate Fitzhugh against the decision of High Peak Borough Council.
- The application Ref HPK/2013/0088, dated 14 February 2013, was refused by notice dated 4 April 2013.
- The works proposed are the addition of a flue for a wood burning stove.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Application for costs

2. At the Hearing an application for costs was made by High Peak Borough Council against Mrs Kate Fitzhugh. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. I consider the main issue to be the effect of the proposed works on the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

Reasons

4. The appeal site contains a Grade II listed building that has been converted into a dwelling. It occupies a prominent site set back from Low Leighton Road. This former Friend's Meeting House, with its traditional, vernacular appearance of stone walls under a slate roof, displays a strong architectural integrity. Its plain appearance is typical of the Quaker tradition which rejected the more ornate style of church building of other denominations. The modest character and simple architectural form is a very strong element of the listed building's special architectural and historic interest.

5. The flue would protrude by around 2m and would be situated around 0.75m from the eaves. It would break the roof line of the front roof slope which is unaltered and free from visual clutter. The proposal would introduce a feature that would be disruptive to the building's architectural integrity and at odds with its traditional appearance. Its position and scale would make it a strident

feature within the front roof slope that would detract from the plain understated appearance of the listed building.

6. I note the appellant's claim that the works would be reversible. Nevertheless, for the unspecified time the flue would be in situ, it would detract from the special interest of the heritage asset. I also note the appellant's offer to relocate the flue within the front roof slope and to make it shorter. However, moving it elsewhere within the front roof slope and reducing its height would not sufficiently ameliorate the adverse effect of such an alteration on the simple architectural form of this listed building.

7. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building and would be harmful to the significance of the heritage asset. The degree of harm would be less than substantial as it would not lead to the total loss of the significance of the heritage asset or anything approaching that, and requires to be weighed against any public benefits of the proposal, including securing the building's optimum viable use.

8. The appellant claims that the interior of the building is affected by damp and the works would reverse this problem, securing the building for future generations to enjoy. However, I have no evidence before me to demonstrate that any damp has been caused by inadequate heating or that the only means of eradication is by the proposed works. In which case, from the evidence I am unable to conclude that sufficient public benefits would arise from the proposal such that they would outweigh the less than substantial harm. The proposal would therefore conflict with paragraphs 132 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework, as echoed in the policies of the development plan.

9. I have taken full and careful account of the views of the interested parties in reaching this decision, including the appellant's argument that double glazed windows would not be permissible at the appeal site. While I am sympathetic to the appellant's desire to heat the large living space and reduce energy costs, it has not been demonstrated that a wood burning stove is the only economical means by which this can be achieved. Consequently, this consideration does not persuade me to allow works that I consider would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building.

10. I have also had regard to the appellant's frustration with the Council's decision to grant planning permission for a wine bar in the village but that decision is not comparable to this appeal.

11. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard McCoy

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT:

Mrs K Fitzhugh	Appellant

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY:

Mrs J Brooks MRTPI	Design and Conservation Officer, High Peak Borough Council
Mrs K Taylor MSc, MRTPI	Planning Officer, High Peak Borough Council

DOCUMENTS

1 Council's letter of notification of the Hearing
2 Email dated 21 March 2013 re lack of an alternative position for the flue