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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 September 2014

**by Mr JP Sargent BA(Hons) MA MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 11 September 2014**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/E/14/2217966**

**Little Hobarris Barn, Chapel Lawn, Bucknell SY7 0BX**

- The 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 appeal is made by Mr James Masters against the decision of Shropshire Council.
  - The application Ref 13/05029/LBC, dated 13 December 2013, was refused by notice dated 22 April 2014.
  - The works proposed are a new sun room to the existing converted barn, in the style of an agricultural engine house.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the works would preserve the special architectural or historic interest of this Grade II listed building.

## Reasons

3. When this building was listed in 1985 it was a barn. Having regard to the List Entry Description and the information submitted by the parties, at that time it was of a timber frame construction clad in weatherboarding on a limestone rubble plinth and it faced a farmyard. It also had a strong linear form, and although a large lean-to was attached to one elevation that seemed to be of a design and materials that gave it the appearance of a subservient addition.
4. In 1988 listed building consent was granted to convert the building to a dwelling. As a result of the implementation of that consent, it still has the weatherboarding and limestone finish and the removal of the lean-to has reinforced the linear form. However, its openings are of a domestic scale and nature, a garden has replaced the farmyard, chimneys have been added, the internal arrangement has changed and, with the exception of about a third of the timber frame, little of the historic fabric remains.
5. The Appellant contended this is now a domestic building that has no agricultural character in its internal or external appearance. Certainly in my opinion it is more residential in nature and its previous role as a functional agricultural barn is less clear. However, it still maintains a linear form and a simplicity of appearance that existed before the conversion was undertaken. These elements are part of its special architectural or historic interest and they contribute to its significance as a heritage asset.

6. Despite the alterations that have occurred the building remains listed, and it is not for me to consider whether or not it should be de-listed. Rather, under section 16 of the Act I am required to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or any features of special architectural or historic interest it possesses, and I have considered the scheme in the light of this onerous statutory requirement. Moreover, paragraph 132 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* (the Framework) says that great weight should be given to the conservation of a heritage asset, and any harm to its significance should require clear and convincing justification.
7. The proposed extension would project prominently from near the middle of the main south-east elevation. The Appellant said its design would resemble that of an agricultural engine house, and this would put back some local farming feature that was removed when the building was converted.
8. I share the Council's concern that the proportions of the works would not reflect those of a typical engine house, and no information has been offered to refute this. In any event, there is no basis to assume an engine house was present at this site before, and therefore attempting to introduce such a significant feature here would confuse an appreciation and understanding of its past. Moreover, in my opinion the curved nature of the proposal's elevations and roof would be at odds with the simplicity of the building and, as it would have robust finish of limestone and slate, its prominent projection from the south-east elevation would, to some degree, be contrary to the strong linear arrangement that is now apparent.
9. Therefore, even accepting the changes that have occurred with the conversion, when assessed together these concerns mean the proposal would cause harm to the significance of the building, taking it still further from its original form and nature. Although this harm would be less than substantial, to my mind such a level of harm is a matter to which considerable weight should be given.
10. Paragraph 134 of the Framework says that where a proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset that harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. While the extension would provide improved accommodation for the occupiers there is no reason to consider that the property as it now stands is unsuited to residential use or that its future would in some way be uncertain without this addition. I am therefore aware of no public benefits that would result from the proposal.
11. Accordingly I conclude the works would detract from the special architectural or historic interest of this Grade II listed building causing less than substantial harm to the significance of this heritage asset. In the absence of any public benefits that outweigh this harm, the works would conflict with the Framework and, insofar as they are relevant to this proposal for listed building consent, Policies CS6 and CS17 in the *Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy*.

### **Other matters**

12. The site is in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the River Clun Special Area of Conservation, but as this is an appeal against the refusal of listed building consent any effect on those designations is not a matter before me.

**Conclusions**

13. Accordingly the appeal should be dismissed.

*J P Sargent*

INSPECTOR