

To Kathryn Hughes
From Joanne McKay – Growth Lancashire
Subject Conservation Comments
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Proposal: Listed Building Consent for the internal re-ordering of listed building and later extensions to create a better 'flow' around the property. Alterations include: re-siting the kitchen, re-instating the former entrance doorway, changing the existing kitchen to a distinct entrance, boot room/utility, create third bedroom from large bathroom and circulation space, retain 'secret' doorway through original external gable, partial removal/demolition of internal wall to 18th century extension to allow a new small timber staircase. No alterations are proposed to the external appearance of the building.

Site Address: Little Blacksticks, Blacksticks Lane, Chipping Lancashire PR3 2WL

Site / Building / Location

The property is a two-storey farmhouse, constructed in the early 17th Century, with a range of later extensions most likely from the 19th and 20th centuries. The listing description notes that, the earlier part is of two units with end stacks. The property is constructed of sandstone rubble with a slate roof and has stone dressings including mullioned windows, hooded drip moulds and plain stone window surrounds.

The site is accessed by a long private drive, off the main road and sits behind Blacksticks Cottage and is set within its own gardens.

The property is located to the south west of Chipping, to the east of Beacon Fell and to the west of the River Loud in a rural setting.

Designations

The site is a Grade II Listed building (List Entry: 1072288).

Legislation

The principle statutory duty under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 is to preserve the special character of heritage assets, including

their setting. LPA's should, in coming to decisions, consider the principle Act, which states the following;

Listed Buildings - Section 66(1)

In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.

Planning Guidance and Policy

NPFF

In determining planning applications LPA's should take account of;

- a. The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b. The positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c. The desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

P.199 states that when considering the impact of proposals on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be applied. This is irrespective of whether any harm is identified as being substantial, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.

Local Plan

Ribble Valley Borough Council - Core Strategy 2008 – 2028- A Local Plan for Ribble Valley:

- Policy DMG1: General Considerations
- Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets
- Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets

Assessment

I have reviewed the supporting documents, which includes the existing and proposed plans and elevations and a Design, Accesses Heritage Statement, prepared by North West Design Collective. October 2022.

The key heritage issue for the LPA to consider is whether the proposal would harm the significance of the Grade II listed building.

The Proposal

The proposed scheme seeks the internal re-ordering of the property, which is noted within the Design and Access Heritage Statement as 'to create a better

'flow' around the property'. The proposed ground floor works include the relocation of the kitchen from the front extension of the property (C19) to the rear side extension (suggested as C18) noted as to 'enable the existing side/rear entrance to be utilised as part of the kitchen'.

The then former kitchen is to be subdivided into an entrance/boot room with utility room and small shower room and WC. This intervention is described as going 'some way to re-instate the former entrance doorway with the stone dated lintel'. As part of these alterations, an additional screen will be introduced within what is proposed to be the new dining room, to allow for two new doors to be installed (one at the dining room, one at the living room), which will provide a small corridor from the entrance/boot room.

Within the original C17 part of the dwelling, a small timber partition wall is proposed to divide the two lounge areas, with a door to the underside of the existing staircase to form two separate more usable rooms.

Within what is defined in the Design and Access Heritage Statement as the two-storey 18th century extension, part of the wall adjoining to the original farmhouse is to be removed to allow for the installation of a timber stair up to the upper floor above to facilitate a master suite and access.

Similarly, part of the original existing wall, which once formed the outer wall of what is described as the C18 part (now an internal wall due to a later extension) will be partly removed to open up the space into the extension to accommodate part of the proposed kitchen and breakfast bar.

On the first floor the proposals seek to slightly relocate a modern partition constructed as a timber stud wall, and install a new partition, both with plasterboard and skim finish. This is to allow the existing bathroom to be replaced with a bedroom and provide a new family bathroom within the existing 'circulation space', visually separating the two distinct parts of the building. However, a physical connection will be maintained via a 'secret' doorway within the existing opening in the original external gable wall of the farmhouse.

This rearrangement is described as offering 'a more cohesive and connected family living arrangement'.

I note that the application involves no alterations to the exterior of the building.

Impact to the significance of the Grade II listed building

The main issue from a conservation perspective is if the proposal causes any harm to the significance of the listed building. The property's significance lies in its aesthetic and historic context, primarily evidenced in the building's C17 fabric and architectural form/appearance. In this context, as a listed building, it can be attributed as having a high significance.

Whilst it is evident that the property has experienced a variety of extensions and some alterations, including some modern interventions; on visiting the site and

from the plans provided the original interior plan form remains legible as well as containing many of the original features that contribute to its significance.

I do not object to the relocation of the kitchen, nor the relocation of the bathroom and the alterations to the existing stud wall. The existing stud wall to the bathroom is modern and provides no intrinsic value to the significance of the listed building. Furthermore, whilst the proposed works result in the loss of the circulation space, as it will become enclosed room, this area has already been subdivided to accommodate the bathroom, therefore, I do not think there will be any additional harm by installing an additional stud wall and creating a usable area.

Similarly, I do not object to the installation of a further stud wall within what will be the new dining room, nor the installation of the new doors on the ground floor, which will create a new corridor from the proposed entrance/boot room. Furthermore, as the existing living space within the original C17 element of the dwelling is already visually separated by the wall and staircase, I do not feel the additional partition wall will result in any discernible harm and is a minor alteration.

I raise no concerns in respect of the subdivision of the existing kitchen to create the boot room, shower and W.C. However whilst this part of the house is a later C19 extension it remains of some interest and as such, further details should be sought in relation to the beams and how they will be dealt with when subdividing the former kitchen. This probably can be dealt with via a suitable worded Condition.

The main and most significant intervention is that of the installation of the new timber staircase, located in the C18 part of the building, which will result in some loss of the historic wall and ceiling. Nevertheless, I acknowledge and accept the need for a cohesive flow within a family home and the proposed work and loss of historic fabric may not necessarily translate into a level of substantive harm but rather an adaption and better use of the historic building. In addition, although an earlier part of the building, there are exposed timber floor joists, which are noted in the Design and Access Heritage Statement as being modern. I agree with this suggestion.

On the upper floor, where the new stairs are to be located, the plans include what appears to be a newly proposed curved wall that will separate the master bedroom from the dressing room and en-suite and will house a new door. Located on the ceiling of the bedroom are two exposed timber beams and it is unclear from the plans how the proposed new curved wall will relate to the existing beams. Additionally, there is a change in floor level and it is unclear how this will be managed within the new scheme, particularly with the proposed new staircase and curved wall. As such, I suggest that further details, including suitable cross-section(s), should be provided in relation to this aspect of the work to ensure any harm is mitigated through the design/construction.

Overall, whilst undoubtedly the works involve change and alteration to the listed building, when viewing the application as a whole, I am largely satisfied that the

proposed works will cause little or no loss of significance to the listed building. In my view the alterations are located in the areas (newer parts), which are the most appropriate to see adaption and change and have been designed in a way where the historic layout remains clearly legible. The most significant intervention (insertion of staircase) has been located away from the principle and most significant C17 elements of the building.

In respect of the internal alterations, with the exception of the works relating to the timber beams in the C18 & C19 elements, largely I feel the current proposals have been adequately assessed and justified. Whilst there will be some minor loss of historic fabric, to facilitate the proposed stairs and kitchen I do not think this translates into any substantive harm to the listed building.

Conclusion / recommendation

As I am required to do so, I have given the duty's imposed by s.66(1) of the P(LBCA) Act 1990 considerable weight in my comments.

Therefore, subject to further clarification of the works relating to the timber beams in the C18 & C19 element, the construction of the new curved wall and the changes in floor levels, it is likely that any harm caused as a result of the proposed works will be of a negligible scale, which could be adequately managed via the submission of a work methodology to confirm the detailed finishes and work procedures.

It will be down to the LPA to consider whether such details are required to be submitted in advance of a decision or can be adequately dealt with via suitable Condition(s). I am however satisfied that subject to agreement on further details the proposal would meet the objectives of Chapter 16 of the NPPF and would be accordance with Policy DMG1: General Considerations, Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets and Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets of the Core Strategy.

Growth Lancashire

A: Suite 18, The Globe Centre, St. James Square, Accrington, BB5 0RE

T: 01254 304556

E: heritage@growthlancashire.co.uk

W: www.growthlancashire.co.uk