

To Kathryn Hughes Ref: 3/2023/0012 &
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From Joanne McKay – Growth Lancashire

Subject Conservation Comments

Date 03/03/2023

Proposal: **Listed Building Consent Application and planning permission for proposed conversion of outbuilding and existing holiday let to create annexe for multi-generational family living to sustain the use of the listed farmhouse, works proposed are within the curtilage of listed building.**

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

Site / Building / Location

The proposal site consists of a former barn and outbuildings within the curtilage of the original 17th century Little Blacksticks farmhouse on the southeast boundary of the wider site; which once formed part of the former farmstead associated to the two-storey farmhouse.

The former two-storey barn is constructed from coursed random natural stone with shaped quoins, window surrounds and a natural grey slate roof and connects to the neighbouring property on Blacksticks Lane. The upper floor has been converted into a holiday apartment. Whereas, the ground floor has a large opening facing the drive. There is an external access stair to the holiday let at first floor. Adjoining the two-storey element is a single storey building with an internal dividing wall used for storage; this was potentially a former stable and washhouse.

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 consists of curtilage buildings to the Grade II Listed Little Blacksticks Farmhouse (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, November 2022.

The key heritage issue for the LPA to consider is:

1. Whether the proposal would harm the significance of the Grade II listed building.

2. Whether the proposal would harm the contribution made by the setting to the significance of the Grade II listed building

The Proposal

The proposed scheme seeks to internally connect the collection of outbuildings to southeast corner of the site. The proposed works include the infilling of the existing large opening on the GF front elevation, which will be partially infilled with a window and stone wall to match existing. This will allow for the re-siting of the living and kitchen space to the ground floor of the former barn, and noted as to 'take advantage of the existing large structural opening to introduce large glazing that can allow light to percolate deep into the floor plan'.

The bedroom will be located on the first floor with an en-suite, accessed via a new internal staircase, creating an under stair pantry. The upper part of the existing external stairs to the annex will be infilled to create additional space in the proposed bedroom 'to sit and enjoy the uninterrupted views'. Additionally, better access to the attic will be introduced and will include the installation of two new rooflights on the rear elevation, where existing roof lights are located.

Within the adjoining single-storey ancillary building (washhouse), a new opening will be created to be used as the entrance to the annex noted within the Design, Access & Heritage Statement as 'making use of the smaller spaces for an entrance, boot store, WC and utility. Moving the entrance here allows original fenestration of doors to the washhouse and stables to be maintained'.

The existing timber stable door will be repaired and will remain inset in its original position. A new glazed fixed window will be inserted behind the stable door. In addition, a former opening (now blocked up) will be reinstated to connect the spaces internally.

The infill opening will be partial glazed with timber double-glazing (no detailed design details provided) and partially filled with random stone walls to match the existing stone. Other glazing will also be timber double-glazing and the proposed rooflights will be double glazed Velux or similar.

Impact to the significance of the Grade II listed building and its setting

As the proposed works are located on curtilage buildings to the listed building, the main issue from a conservation perspective is if the proposal causes any harm to the significance of the listed building and its setting. The properties significance lies in its aesthetic and historic context, primarily evidenced in the fabric and architectural form/appearance of the C17 farmhouse. In this context, the listed building can be attributed as having a high significance.

In relation to setting, Historic England's advice is contained in its Planning Note 3 (second edition) entitled The Setting of Heritage Assets. This describes the setting as being the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced and explains that this may be more extensive than its immediate curtilage and need not be confined to areas, which have public access. Whilst setting is often

expressed by reference to visual considerations, it is also influenced by the historic relationships between buildings and places and how views allow the significance of the asset to be appreciated.

From visiting the site and completing map regression, it is evident that the curtilage buildings and the listed building are both historically and visually connected. The first edition OS map evidences that Little Blacksticks was originally set in extensive agricultural land in a somewhat isolated setting, which has experienced only minor change, with the development of further agricultural buildings; now in separate ownership (Blacksticks Cottage), retaining the rural setting.

Nevertheless, it is evident that the former barn and ancillary buildings have been altered and experienced modern alterations, including the barns conversion to a dwelling/holiday apartment, modern windows and a large open area on the ground floor.

I do not object to the relocation of the kitchen and living space to the existing open storage area nor to the infilling of the large opening on the ground-floor. Whilst a large window opening is somewhat out of character with the building itself I accept that the large opening is already in situ and the proposed design is simply utilising this existing opening.

Similarly, the proposed new window to encapsulate the existing external staircase to provide an additional indoor space is acceptable. Whilst the existing entrance will no longer be used, the opening remains (internally) as well as a large proportion of the external staircase, evidencing its former use.

However, design details of the proposed windows have not been provided and I would recommend that further information relating to the design of windows is provided, or secured by a suitably worded Condition. Likewise, I do not object to the installation of the additional rooflights on the southern roof slope. Whilst there are already two rooflights in situ on this elevation, they are located on the roof slope facing away from the listed building and cannot be viewed from within the grounds or any important public vantage point.

In regards to the internal alterations of the barn, I do not object to the installation of the proposed staircase, linking the two floors internally. I am mindful that the barn has already undergone extensive alteration in its conversion to a holiday apartment.

On considering the alterations to the washhouse and former stables, internally other than their plan form and materials, there is little of intrinsic value remaining. Although, the proposed new opening into the former barn will result in the loss of some historic fabric, I think the alteration is still minor in the context of the group of buildings and their overall significance. Formerly, the washhouse and stables were linked via an opening that has since been blocked up and as such providing a new opening here (although not directly reinstating a former opening) will not result in any additional harm. Externally, the existing doorways are to be retained including the stable door. By inserting a new fixed glazed window behind the

stable door, visually the existing fenestration is retained and should be seen as a positive element of the proposals.

In this context, whilst undoubtedly a change to the curtilage listed building, the proposal are utilising existing modern alterations and retaining the existing fenestration, allowing the buildings and their original planform and use still to be read. In my view, the alterations are minor and appropriate adaption and change of heritage assets.

In respect of the proposed works and the setting of the principle listed building, the most notable changes are those relating to the proposed new windows in the large opening and on the external staircase. When travelling north along the private access drive where it meets the grounds/gardens the listed building and curtilage buildings will be viewed in the same context. As I noted above, the proposed windows, will be utilising the existing openings, particular that of the ground floor storage area, which is in itself a modern alteration. Within this context, I do not think the proposed changes translates into any substantive harm to the designated assets.

As such, subject to clarification of the proposed window design, it is my view that any harm caused as a result of the proposed works will be negligible and this is more than offset by the proposed active use of the outbuildings and the benefits of retaining the group of buildings.

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.

Subject to further details as relating to the proposed window design, I consider the current proposal would meet the statutory test 'to preserve', causing no discernible harm to the significance of the listed curtilage buildings, or to the contribution made by the setting to the principle listed building. Therefore, I do not feel the LPA would be required to undertake a balancing exercise is required as per NPPF P.202.

As such, I feel the proposal meets the objectives of Chapter 16 of the NPPF and is in accordance with Policy DMG1: General Considerations, Policy DME4: Protecting Heritage Assets and Key Statement EN5: Heritage Assets of the Core Strategy.

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