

APPEAL STATEMENT on the BEHALF of the APPELLANT for
REFUSAL of PLANNING and LISTED BUILDING CONSENT at
SABDEN HOUSE, WESLEY STREET, SABDEN, CLITHEROE. BB7 9EH.

INTRODUCTION.

An application for Listed Building Consent (Grade II) was refused by the Planning Authority with the reasons for refusal given as:

'The proposed conservatory is harmful to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building because of the incongruity and conspicuousness resulting from its size and form including new parapet roof and roof lantern.'

SABDEN HOUSE

Sabden House is described in the Listing as a detached villa of 1847 and reflecting the character of Neo-Romanesque architecture. Popularised in the mid-nineteenth century, the Romanesque revival takes its roots from the Romanesque, described by J. Summerson in his work 'Heavenly Mansions' as the most composite of the classical orders and of Romanesque art, 'there were innumerable contributors to its creation'.

At Sabden House the particular historic Romanesque references are; the scale, proportions and massing of the building, the roof type, the window openings and that of aedicular architecture in which a door or window opening is framed by columns on either side and a pediment above. This notion is most evident in the grand entrance porch with its Roman Arch entrance door head, entablature and window head detail. The west facing elevation has the characteristics of a 'triumphal arch' with ashlar corners supporting the entablature and its flat roof hidden by the cornice.

The external elevations of the house are at the ratio of approximately 1:2 giving the building a well set and stable appearance. The roof is low pitched, hipped and of a form typical of a Roman villa and then Neo-Romanesque with its flat roofed central section, where the Atrium would be. The architectural features are exemplified where the rough stonework of the external walls gives way to ashlar detailing, mullioned window openings have a Roman Arch head detail and an ashlar embrasure. Window openings are of relatively small proportions on the elevation but they have their own hierarchy, where the opening, embrasure, inner surround and frame combine in the composition in order to fit the scale and proportions of the elevations.

The house is set within a site of some 0.4ha and arranged on a north south axis. It is approached from the main entrance gates some 35 metres away in a southerly direction and beyond is the public thoroughfare. It is arguable that the main frontage to the house is the south elevation since to the front of this is where the formal gardens would have been and the better views are seen from inside the property. The south elevation is symmetrical and the porch reads as an extension to the west elevation. The formal entrance to the house is located in the south elevation of the porch which further supports the view that the south elevation is main frontage of the house. When the house is viewed from the west, one faces the side of the porch and the later additions to the service wing at the rear of the property are clearly visible. The main frontage of a prestigious property such as this would not normally incorporate views of the service buildings and if it is argued this is the front elevation, its visual merit is reduced by the presence of this architecturally subservient wing.

The service wing situated on the north elevation of the house, is a substantial building of relatively simple design and construction more in keeping with a domestic scale. The elevation of this wing is seen in the west elevation of the main house along with the side elevation of the existing conservatory. Aside from the symmetry of the main house elevation the composition as a whole is inherently asymmetrical.

The existing conservatory, at approximately 2.20 metres eaves high from floor level is of a C20 domestic scale and would look at home on a dwelling situated in a housing estate. The conservatory is sited in a space where the main house and the service wing abut one another and is largely obscured from public view in this location. Architecturally, the existing conservatory piece has a filigree, Gothic aspect about it.

PROPOSED CONSERVATORY

The design began with Historic Scotland's document "Managing Change in the Historic Environment" (Appendix 1) and the approach to contextual design. At Sabden House, the challenge is that the conservatory is located at the abutment of the west elevations of the main house and the of the service wing, each with their corresponding architecture. When viewed from the west, the service wing is the back-cloth to the conservatory whilst the west elevation of the conservatory is almost adjacent to the elevation of the main house. From this point of view, it was concluded that the conservatory should be a device which connects the two parts of the west elevation together, modest in appearance yet it should also correspond with the stature of the main house. Conservatory walls are generally glazed and consequently the construction does not need to correspond with either of the two types of solid wall onto which it abuts. As a Romanesque idiom, the Loggia or Pavilion are forms which fit the notion of a conservatory with their post and beam construction. The design takes elements from Historic Scotland's guide using; profile, massing, scale and form of the existing as informants and an element of 'Assertive contrast' where historic detailing is included in order to support its relationship with the main building.

The proposed conservatory is shown as being 155mm wider on the north elevation than the existing for consistency in the spacing of the timber frame. The height takes reference from the main house and porch where similar ratios and proportions are used to determine the geometry of the design so that it is in keeping with the existing building. These criteria also provide the design tools to ensure that the addition is neither too big nor too small. It was also necessary to take account of the proposed location of the conservatory and the roof construction is set below the staircase window sill, so that the detail there remains unaffected and to avoid fouling window openings on the service wing. The warm roof structure means that the ceiling height is just over 2.40 metres which is slightly higher than a domestic 'normal' but more consistent for an extension to this house. The window head is at a level set just below the entablature, so that visually the elevation appears of a more appropriate and proportionate scale to Sabden House, than the existing conservatory.

Further inspiration for the form of the proposed conservatory is taken from the main entrance porch. With its rectilinear elevations and flat roof, the form offers consistency in the composition of the west elevation as a whole and the introduction of other spurious forms is avoided. Timber columns set on a stone plinth wall are reminiscent of the Loggia or Pavilion and are completed by the entablature. The composition follows the order which is found in the Porch and 'borrows' the scalloped detail on the lower section, then cornice, frieze, cornice. Dimensionally, the window openings respect the main house where the ratio is 1:2 and the geometry of other elements correlate with those of the porch and main building.

The parapet roof, (ie. the entablature), is a Romanesque feature and follows in the pattern of the Porch. The lantern light acknowledges the form of the Pediment in Roman architecture and although seemingly tenuous, the composition is very diminished without it. Further associations are with the Atrium and in the proposed conservatory the opening in the ceiling and the roof light are reminiscent of this. Climatically, the conservatory needs to be weatherproof and the lantern, with its low pitched and hipped configuration, is a Roman architectural form ideally suited to this purpose.

Historic Scotland methodology and has been used as a design tool for the proposed conservatory ensuring a well considered approach to design has been taken from the outset. This approach is intended to enhance and protect the significance of the listed building by the design of a structure that befits the historic asset. Taking account of all of the above, the size and form of the proposal have been demonstrated to be in keeping with the Listed Building and as opposed to being incongruous; the proposal is one of a coherent architectural composition which would enhance and protect the historic character and fabric of Sabden House.

The Local Planning Authority state in their reason for refusal that the proposal is incongruous and conspicuous; this is disputed. The house is approached from the main entrance gates which are to the south, as is the public thoroughfare and public views into the site. The main body of Sabden House and the projection of the porch westwards effectively screen the 'service wing' on the west elevation when the property is viewed from the south. These features in turn screen the existing and proposed conservatories against direct public views from the south. Any view is at an oblique angle and thereby reduces the visual prominence of the conservatory and any real detriment Sabden House. (see p. 6).

The alleged incongruity and conspicuousness resulting from the size and form including the parapet roof and roof lantern of the proposed conservatory, is avoided as it responds proportionately to the existing rectilinear form of the entrance porch and the design, Neo-Romanesque nature and architectural detailing of Sabden House. It is contended that a smaller, more delicate conservatory would not compliment the noble scale of the main building and would appear fragile and diminutive in relationship to the main house. The size and proportions and the design of the proposed conservatory make references to the listed building and are derivatives of the more grand and noble scale of Sabden House.

Therefore and contrary to the view of the LPA, it is considered that the position, design, scale and form of the proposed conservatory would not be sufficiently incongruous or conspicuous, to prove harmful to the architectural and historic interest of the Listed Building.

As a matter of interest it is stated in the planning officer's report that;

“Both proposed and existing conservatories are detrimental to the appearance of the historic building because of their incongruence in location, immediately adjacent and unbalancing the historic build's symmetric front elevation...”

yet the existing conservatory was granted planning permission 1999. Whilst the building was not listed at that time, it was clearly of architectural and historic interest. The visual impact of the conservatory on the host property would certainly have been considered carefully when the permission was granted. Furthermore, it has been proffered that the south elevation could conceivably be considered to be the front.

SUMMARY

In its document 'Managing Significance in Decision Making in the Historic Environment' Historic England speaks of cumulative impact and in paragraph 28 '...whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset'. (see p.7).

It has been demonstrated in this appeal statement that the proposal can be seen to make a positive and beneficial enhancement to the historic significance of Sabden House.

In the same Historic England document, paragraph 53 (see p.8) gives guidance upon;

'.....why good design is important and how it can be achieved. In terms of the historic environment, some or all of the following factors may influence what will make the scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and proposed use of new development successful in its context.

The factors which have been considered are summarised below:

- The proposal uses a well informed design processes in order to achieve a satisfactory result.
- The design contains elements of the existing Listed Building in form, scale and order.
- The proposed conservatory is largely concealed from views into the site.
- The proposed development is to be constructed of good quality materials and finishes.

To conclude the case in support of this proposal,

- It has been demonstrated that the proposed conservatory is of a size and form which is complimentary to the Listed Building by using a proprietary design methodology with references of form, scale and detail taken from the original building.
- It has been further demonstrated that the parapet wall and roof lantern are an integral part of the design and the architectural integrity of the proposal.
- The location of the proposal is in the place of an existing conservatory which is in the most obscured area on the site. It is away from direct public views and is not easily publicly visible.

Lastly, it is noted that the case office states in their planning report that,

“The proposal has little impact upon historic fabric and an incongruous conservatory already exists – the harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building is 'less than substantial”.

This contradicts the reason for refusal given and therefore it is contested that the proposed conservatory is of an acceptable form, size and design, it will protect and enhance the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed building Sabden House and church, and that both listed building consent and planning permission should be granted for the proposal.

PLANNING POLICIES.

There were no objections submitted to the Planning Authority regarding the proposal.

Ribble Valley Core Strategy Key Statement EN5.

The proposal meets with this statement:

- It protects the heritage asset by the re-use of the site and location of an existing building.
- The location is the most discreet available on the site and the visual impact has been shown to be minimal.
- The design has been demonstrated to be characteristic in appearance and scale of the listed building.

Policy DGM1. General Considerations.

- The proposal is of a high standard of design and has been shown to consider the building in context.
- It has been demonstrated in this appeal that the proposed conservatory is sympathetic to the existing building in terms of scale, massing, style, features. In respect of building materials, the conservatory uses existing stone plinth walls but by necessity requires glazed 'walls'. The intention is that the proposed bears reference to the notion of Roman construction and the post and beam system is self evident. The entablature is of solid traditional appearance and the roof lantern has a high proportion of glass and reading almost as transparent.
- The development has clearly been shown to enhance the heritage asset, respecting the architecture and historic character.
- The proposal has been demonstrated to avoid visual harm to the listed building.

Policy DME4 Protecting Heritage Assets.

- The proposal has been shown to respect the listed building and by default the Conservation Area.
- Its location has been chosen to avoid significant harm to the existing building or the Conservation Area.
- The scale, size design and materials have been carefully put together to create a development which is complimentary and respectful of the existing.
- The 'Supplementary Planning Guidance. Extensions and Alterations to Dwellings' published by Ribble Valley Borough Council September 2000 has been followed and the various aspects of that document have been covered in the appeal statement above.

Conservation Area.

The proposal respects the Conservation Area and the setting of the listed church by re-use of an existing location which is significantly secluded from outside views thus averting any demonstrable harm.

PREVIOUS PLANNING APPLICATIONS RELEVANT to SITE.

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|----|-------------|---|-----------|------------|
| 1. | 3/1990/0719 | Erection of garage for 4 cars. | Approved | 12/10/1990 |
| 2. | 3/1992/0133 | Erection of tennis court | Approved | 08/04/1992 |
| 3. | 3/1999/0323 | Conservatory at rear | Approved | 18/06/1999 |
| 4. | 3/2014/0946 | Demolition of conservatory replacement with verandah. LB. | Withdrawn | 19/11/2014 |
| 5. | 3/2014/0820 | Demolition of conservatory replacement with verandah. FP. | Withdrawn | 19/11/2014 |



Site viewed from south along thoroughfare.

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23 HERs will usually be defined by the administrative boundaries (whether terrestrial, inter-tidal or marine) of the local authority(-ies) that an HER covers. To ensure useful coverage in all types of planning casework, HERs are encouraged to consult user groups regularly and take account of their information requirements in sourcing material.

24 Information generated in putting together the local plan, during the process of applying for consent and in the discharging of conditions placed on consents will often provide new evidence of the state and significance of the historic environment. It can be invaluable in plan-making and decision-making in the future and is of significant public benefit in furthering the understanding of our surroundings and our past. This information should be made publicly accessible, usually through the Historic Environment Record.

Assessing the proposals

25 In deciding applications for planning permission and listed building consent, local planning authorities will need to assess the particular significance of the heritage asset(s) which may be affected by the proposal and the impact of the proposal on that significance reflecting the approach as described in paragraphs 3-5 above. In most cases, to assess significance LPAs will need to take expert advice, whether in-house, from shared services or from consultants. It is good practice to use professionally accredited experts and to comply with relevant standards and guidance (For example, the ClFA Standard and Guidance: *Archaeological Advice*). To find a list of expert groups, see [paragraph 19](#).

26 Successful sustainable development achieves economic, social and environmental gains jointly and simultaneously through planning decisions (NPPF, Paragraph 8). If there is any apparent conflict between the proposed development and the conservation of a heritage asset then the decision-maker might need to

consider whether alternative means of delivering the development benefits could achieve a more sustainable result, before proceeding to weigh benefits against any harm. For example, raft foundations can span archaeological deposits, so minimising both the physical impact and the costs associated with excavation.

27 Substantial harm is a high test which may not arise in many cases. In those cases where harm or loss is considered likely to be substantial (NPPF, Paragraph 132 & PPG 01-7), then the LPA will need to consider the relevant NPPF tests. Further detail on the tests on levels of harm can be found at paragraphs 133-135 and 139 of the NPPF. Further guidance on heritage conservation as a public benefit in itself, optimum viable use, levels of harm and mitigating harm are given in the PPG section ID 18a, paragraphs 15 to 20.

Cumulative impact

28 The cumulative impact of incremental small-scale changes may have as great an effect on the significance of a heritage asset as a larger scale change. Where the significance of a heritage asset has been compromised in the past by unsympathetic development to the asset itself or its setting, consideration still needs to be given to whether additional change will further detract from, or can enhance, the significance of the asset in order to accord with NPPF policies. Negative change could include severing the last link to part of the history of an asset or between the asset and its original setting. Conversely, positive change could include the restoration of a building's plan form or an original designed landscape.

Opportunities to enhance assets, their settings and local distinctiveness

52 Sustainable development can involve seeking positive improvements in the quality of the historic environment. There will not always be opportunities to enhance the significance or improve a heritage asset but the larger the asset the more likely there will be. Most conservation areas, for example, will have sites within them that could add to the character and value of the area through development, while listed buildings may often have extensions or other alterations that have a negative impact on the significance. Similarly, the setting of all heritage assets will frequently have elements that detract from the significance of the asset or hamper its appreciation.

Design and local distinctiveness

53 Both the NPPF (section 7) and PPG (section ID26) contain detail on why good design is important and how it can be achieved. In terms of the historic environment, some or all of the following factors may influence what will make the scale, height, massing, alignment, materials and proposed use of new development successful in its context:

- The history of the place
- The relationship of the proposal to its specific site
- The significance of nearby assets and the contribution of their setting, recognising that this is a dynamic concept
- The general character and distinctiveness of the area in its widest sense, including the general character of local buildings, spaces, public realm and the landscape, the grain of the surroundings, which includes, for example the street pattern and plot size

- The size and density of the proposal related to that of the existing and neighbouring uses
- Landmarks and other built or landscape features which are key to a sense of place
- The diversity or uniformity in style, construction, materials, colour, detailing, decoration and period of existing buildings and spaces
- The topography
- Views into, through and from the site and its surroundings
- Landscape design
- The current and historic uses in the area and the urban grain
- The quality of the materials