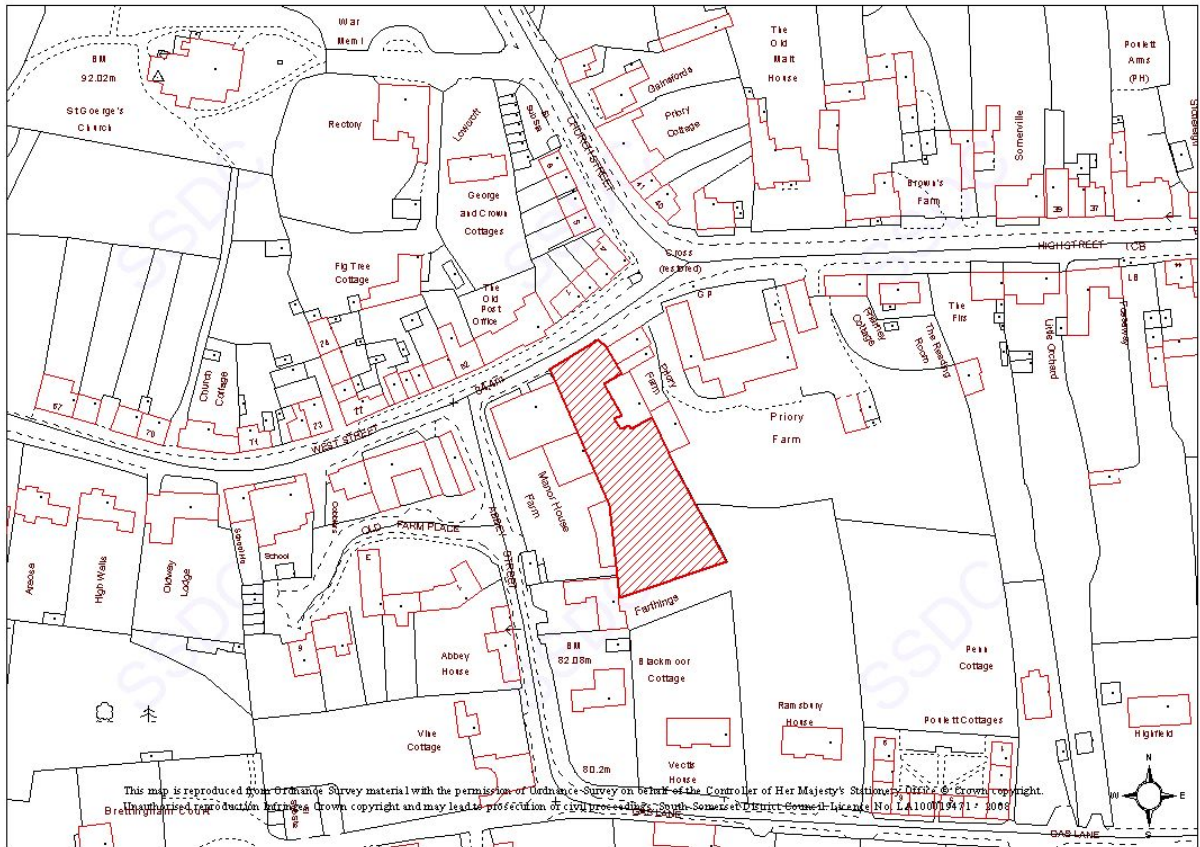


OFFICER: Steven Banks (01935) 462119 [Item 1]
APPL.NO: 07/05331/LBC APPLICATION TYPE: Listed Building Consent
PARISH: Hinton St George WARD: EGGWOOD
DESCRIPTION: Re-positioning of staircase, internal alterations to bathroom, re-open window and re-instate mullions (GR: 341961/112596)
LOCATION: Tetts Farm West Street Hinton St George Somerset TA17 8SB
APPLICANT: Mr S. Grant
AGENT: John Davie Holly House 15 East Street Martock Somerset TA12 6NF
DATE ACCEPTED: 5 December 2007

REASON FOR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE:

A statutory consultee, the Council for British Archaeology objects to the application. Members will also recall that this application was withdrawn from the agenda for the September meeting of the Committee to enable a fuller report on the proposals to be presented.

SITE DESCRIPTION AND PROPOSAL:



This application relates to a 16th century two storey ham stone dwelling with a thatched roof located off West Street in Hinton St George. The building is grade II listed.

This application relates to the reinstatement of a window, the repositioning of the staircase, the blocking up of a doorway and the creation of a new doorway.

HISTORY:

862192 - Various alterations including the installation of a new window in the west elevation of the dwelling - Conditionally approved 03/11/1986

862794 and 862795 - Demolition of a lean to and the erection of an extension - Conditionally approved 30/01/1987

900319 and 900320 - Demolition of rear extension and fence and erection of extension to form garden room, lobby and porch - Conditionally approved 18/04/1990

POLICY:

Relevant Development Plan Documents:

Somerset and Exmoor National Park Joint Structure Plan
Policy 9 - The Built Historic Environment

South Somerset Local Plan (Adopted April 2006)
EH1 - Conservation Areas
EH3 - Change of Use of Listed Buildings and Alterations to Listed Buildings

The starting point for the exercise of listed building control is the statutory requirement on local planning authorities to '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' (section 16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Sections 16 and 66 of the Act require authorities considering applications for planning permission or listed building consent for works that affect a listed building to have special regard to certain matters, including the desirability of preserving the setting of the building. The setting is often an essential part of the building's character, especially if a garden or grounds have been laid out to complement its design or function.

PPG15 - Planning and the Historic Environment. Applicants for listed building consent must be able to justify their proposals. They will need to show why works, which would affect the character of a listed building are desirable or necessary. They should provide the local planning authority with full information, to enable them to assess the likely impact of their proposals on the special architectural or historic interest of the building and on its setting.

CONSULTATIONS:

Hinton St George Parish Council - No objections.

Area Engineer - No comment.

English Heritage comment:-

'...we have been forwarded photographs of it and it appears that the main issue is whether the reinstatement of the historic form of the kitchen would outweigh the loss of partitions and staircase required to achieve that potential conservation gain. From our assessment of the photographs, plans and vernacular building report the staircase appears to represent a nineteenth century alteration, is of very plain construction and detracts somewhat from the form and proportions of the original lower end room to this three room and through passage house. On that basis we consider that its loss would be outweighed by the benefit in returning the room to the form, which represents the more significant earlier phases of the house. However, one caveat before the Council resolves whether or not to grant consent is that investigation is needed into the date and construction of the partition adjoining the lower end of the cross passage - which would be removed in order to insert the new staircase - to ensure that it is not itself of historic significance. If it emerges that it is of significance then the introduction of the new staircase may have to be re-thought.'

Conservation Officer comments:-

'Having regard to the views of English Heritage, I inspected the remaining wall of the cross passage. From the hall side, it's clearly been covered in modern plasterboard, and we were

therefore unable to precisely ascertain the construction and date. Through the electricity box at the top we could see some lath and plaster behind it, but it was unclear to me precisely what the wall was constructed of.'

The Conservation Officer therefore recommended two courses of action. The first was to do some controlled 'opening up' of the wall, the second to alter the staircase arrangements.

Note: The agents have submitted photographs that show that the wall is not part of the original construction of the house and therefore has limited historic significance.

The Conservation Officer commented further following the objection from the Council for British Archaeology(CBA):-

'..I consider the way forward is to maintain the plan form of the entrance hall by allowing the stairs in the proposed position but maintaining the hall wall between the bottom of the stairs and the existing doorway through to the kitchen. As such, the hallway will clearly read.'

Note: The plans have been amended in line with this advice and all appropriate agencies have been re-notified. The CBA maintain their objection to the proposal whilst English Heritage still has no objections to the proposal.

Council for British Archaeology -

'Our initial letter of the 12th February objected to the loss of the later stair and I am afraid that we must reiterate our objection to its loss (the revised application proposes to enclose the new stair but still shows demolition). From a brief inspection of the feature it would seem to be inserted late 18th/early 19th century and probably a service stair to access the lower end of the 1st floor from the service end of the house, suggesting farm or house servants may have used these chambers. It is therefore of historic merit and part of the development of the farmhouse. It is also the only original stair left in the house which has seen a 20th century staircase built to provide access to the east and middle chambers from the 20th century rear extension.

In addition the installation of the new staircase would involve further loss of historic fabric as 2 metre lengths of approximately 7 floor joists would have to be removed and no details of the ramifications of this, or of the new feature, have been provided.

The proposed removal of a partially blocked window on the West elevation after removal of the staircase must also be examined. The justification given is that it will provide much needed light but additional light has already been provided on the south elevation by the replacement of a window by French doors, although construction of a 20th century lean-to along the south elevation restricts light.

We note that many early and original features such as planked doors remain but there is no mention as to what is to happen to them - we would have liked this information.

There are numerous paragraphs of PPG 15 that we could quote in support of retaining historic staircases, features that belong to later phases of the buildings development and providing justification for proposals i.e. Annex C 62 and paras . 3.13 and 3.4 respectively.

In summary we believe that as submitted, these proposals are not justifiable and would unacceptably damage the integrity of the listed building. We therefore ask you to refuse consent for the application.'

County Archaeology - No objection.

CONSIDERATIONS:

Section 16 of the Listed Building and Conservation Areas Act is the starting point for the exercise of listed building control. This places a statutory requirement on local planning

authorities to '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'

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 repeats the duty imposed under S54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and requires that decision must be made in accordance with relevant Development Plan Documents unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

There is clearly a dispute between the opinions of the Councils' Conservation Officer and English Heritage and the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). The Conservation Officer and English Heritage are of the opinion that the proposed works will enable the reinstatement of the old plan form of the house. Whilst there will have to be some alterations internally, it has been suggested that the fixtures (staircase) to be removed or altered are not of significant historical significance. The CBA dispute this as they believe that the stairs are of historic significance. The CBA state that there are numerous paragraphs of PPG 15 that they could quote to support the retention of historic features. It should be noted that the paragraphs referred to relate to 'historic staircases'. Whilst there is a dispute about the historic significance of the staircase, it is accepted that the staircase is NOT original to the 16th century building and is a later addition. Indeed it should be noted that the original stairs still form part of the existing property but are no longer used.

It is generally agreed that the staircase is Victorian in origin and it therefore has to be determined whether its retention is appropriate or whether the reinstatement of the historic room form of the kitchen would outweigh the loss of the partitions and staircase required to achieve that potential conservation gain.

English Heritage considered the staircase to be of very plain construction that detracts somewhat from the form and the proportions of the original lower end room to this room and through passage house. The removal of the staircase would enable the reinstatement of the original historic form of the house, this would further enable the re-instatement of the four light chamfered stone mullioned window which is presently blocked up to a two light window. It is considered that on this basis the loss of the Victorian staircase would be outweighed by the benefit in returning the room to the form that represents the more significant earlier phases of the house.

RECOMMENDATION:

Refer the recommendation to approve to GOSW (Government Office for the South West).

JUSTIFICATION:

The proposal by reason of its size, scale, design, materials and position, and its informed intervention into the historic fabric of this listed building, is considered to respect the historic and architectural interests of the building and is in accordance with policy 9 of the Joint Structure Plan Review, policy EH3 and EH1 of the South Somerset Local Plan, and the provisions of PPG 15.

Application Permitted with Conditions

1. The works hereby granted consent shall be begun before the expiration of three years from the date of this consent.

Reason: As required by Section 16(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

2. No work shall be carried out on site unless details of the design, materials and external finish for all new openings have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will include detailed drawings including sections of at least 1:5. Such approved details, once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the Listed Building in accordance with PPG15 and EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2000).

3. No work shall be carried out on site unless the method and detail of the blocking up of existing internal openings has been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the Listed Building in accordance with PPG15 and EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2000).

4. No work shall be carried out on site unless details of all new and replacement plasters, renders, floor surfaces, ceilings etc, including any making good of any existing structure abutting any of those to be demolished, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such approved details, once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the Listed Building in accordance with PPG15 and EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2000).

5. No work shall be carried out on site unless details of the new staircase, including detailed design, materials and finish are to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This will include detailed drawings including sections of at least 1:5. Such approved details, once carried out shall not be altered without the prior written consent of the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the Listed Building in accordance with PPG15 and EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2000).

6. No work shall be carried out on site unless full construction details of the new partitions and finishes have been submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such details shall show new partitions scribed around, not cut into the existing cornices, skirting or other features.

Reason: In the interests of the special architectural and historic interests of the Listed Building in accordance with PPG15 and EH3 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2000).

7. The development hereby permitted shall not be carried out otherwise than in complete accordance with the submitted plans and specifications as amended by drawing number 962/46/JD/07 revision B dated 14/03/2008.

Reason: For the avoidance of doubt as to the development authorised as the submitted proposal has been amended.