



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2013

by **Stephen Brown MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA**

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

Decision date: 26 March 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/E/2182698

The Black Bull, Stamford Walk, Stamford PE9 2JE

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is by Croft Commercial Developments Ltd against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application ref. S/12/1429/LB, dated 7 June 2012, was refused by notice dated 3 August 2012.
 - The proposal is to retain works carried out comprising alterations to window and door heads to provide water drips.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The Black Bull is a Grade II* listed building – formerly known, and listed as the 'Stamford Hotel'. It stands within the Stamford Conservation Area. I have therefore paid special regard to the desirability of preserving the special interest and setting of the listed building, and of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area, as required by Sections 16(2), 72(1) of the Act¹.
3. There is a hand-written note on the list description saying '*Converted to retail units 1979. Only partly listed. Known as Stamford Walk*'. I have no information on the provenance of this note, or indeed whether it is the case that it is recognised as partly listed.
4. Section 1(5)(a) of the Act says that any object or structure fixed to the (listed) building shall be treated as part of the building. Irrespective of the hand-written note, the back extension must by definition be a part of the listed building. Furthermore, there is no question raised by the appellant, the Council or English Heritage as to the validity of the listing. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis that the Black Bull is a Grade II* listed building.
5. For purposes of accuracy I have amended the proposal description so that it is for the same works as shown on the application drawings and described in the appellant company's Impact and Justification Statement. That is, to include reference to the alteration to door, as well as window heads.
6. As stated in the heading above, the works have already been done, and I am treating this appeal as being for their retention.

¹ The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 as amended.

Main Issue

7. From my inspection of the appeal site and its surroundings, and from the written representations made I consider the main issue in this appeal to be the effect of the works upon the special interest of The Black Bull, and upon the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Reasons

8. The Black Bull stands on the northern side of St Mary's Street. Onto the street it has a grand neo-classical façade built in the early 19th century. The building extends a considerable distance the back, where it is accessible on foot along Stamford Walk immediately to the west of the building. The pedestrian area wraps around the back extension on its northern and eastern sides.
9. The works comprise alteration to the rendered heads of 7 windows on the northern and eastern elevations of the building, and 3 doors on the eastern elevation. It is clear from photographs that before these works the render above the openings had been flush with the surrounding rendered surfaces and finished with a radiused edge. These have been altered by the removal of sections of the render above the door and window heads; planting a steel bead to form a bell-stop, and subsequent reapplication and painting of render. Although the stop-beads are referred to as being of stainless steel, they appeared to me very much as though they are galvanised steel.
10. The appellant argues that the lack of drips had caused long-term water damage to window frames, and that the works were done to prevent rainwater running down the face of the wall and then directly back onto the window frames.
11. Formation of drips appears to me a reasonable and appropriate action to take in order to preserve the building fabric. However, it is very much a question of the details employed and the manner of execution.
12. Notwithstanding the Council's opinion on this, I consider the steel stop-beads introduce an entirely incongruous material of very precise form into this otherwise traditionally constructed building. The undersides and front edges of the beads are readily visible at reasonably close range, and give an over-precise line to the render. This material – whether stainless or galvanised – is quite out of character with materials that would have been used historically.
13. The works have been done in a crude manner, leaving uneven and lumpy surfaces, poorly blended in to the surrounding render. I saw instances where the new patch of render has cracked away from the surrounding render. As a result the roughly rectangular area of replaced render above each opening is prominently differentiated from the surrounding surface. It also appears as though the replacement render may be composed of cement-and-sand rather than a traditional lime render that would be appropriate for an historic building. The lack of match between the new areas of render and the surrounding render is prominent and I consider causes significant harm to the appearance of the building.
14. I appreciate that the existing render is probably not original and has numerous defects. However, that does not justify carrying out works that are themselves harmful to the appearance of the building.

15. Overall I consider the works cause significant harm to both the character and appearance of the listed building and therefore to its special interest. Furthermore, the works detract from the appearance of the building to an extent that they harm the appearance of the wider Conservation Area.
16. I conclude on the main issue that the works cause significant harm to the special interest of The Black Bull, and to the character and appearance of the Stamford Conservation Area. I therefore intend to dismiss the appeal.

Stephen Brown

INSPECTOR