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## Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 11 April 2018

**by Thomas Shields MA DipURP MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 06 June 2018**

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### **Appeal A: Ref: APP/B9506/W/18/3194635**

#### **Laurel Cottage, Northover Lane, Tiptoe, Lymington, SO41 6FS**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr R Cooper against the decision of the New Forest National Park Authority.
  - The application Ref: 17/00497, dated 7 June 2017, was refused by notice dated 31 July 2017.
  - The development proposed is erection of one and a half storey ancillary extension to the rear of the existing cottage to provide safe vertical access between existing levels and modest additional accommodation. Adaptation to two rear (north elevation) windows into doorways, reinstatement of a doorway to the north elevation west side. Removal of small amount of thatch and two or three relevant rafters to allow for access to be made from existing roof rooms to a safe usable staircase.
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### **Appeal B: Ref: APP/B9506/Y/18/3194637**

#### **Laurel Cottage, Northover Lane, Tiptoe, Lymington, SO41 6FS**

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
  - The appeal is made by Mr Russell Cooper against the decision of the New Forest National Park Authority.
  - The application Ref: 17/00498, dated 7 June 2017, was refused by notice dated 31 July 2017.
  - The works proposed are erection of one and a half storey ancillary extension to the rear of the existing cottage to provide safe vertical access between existing levels and modest additional accommodation. Adaptation to two rear (north elevation) windows into doorways, reinstatement of a doorway to the north elevation west side. Removal of small amount of thatch and two or three relevant rafters to allow for access to be made from existing roof rooms to a safe usable staircase.
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### **Decisions**

1. The appeals are dismissed.

### **Application for costs**

2. An application for an award of costs was made by the appellant against the New Forest National Park Authority. This is subject of a separate decision.

### **Main Issue**

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development and works on the special architectural and historic interest (the significance) of the Grade II listed building, and on the local character of the New Forest National Park.

## Reasons

4. An earlier appeal<sup>1</sup> against the refusal of planning permission for a two storey rear extension to Laurel Cottage was dismissed in 2016 and is referred to by both of the main parties. However, while there are similarities with the earlier appeal scheme the current proposal is of a different design. Consequently, I have determined the appeals before me on their own merit while taking account of the earlier appeal insofar as it is material.
5. The Grade II listed Laurel Cottage (Ref: 1426003) was constructed during the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century as a simple one-and-a-half storey building having a two cell west-to-east linear plan form. The front (south) elevation and windows of the original cottage are symmetrical either side of a central porch and doorway facing Northover Lane. It was built using timber, clay cob and long straw thatch. Some of the long straw thatch remains underneath the top laid reed thatch.
6. A single storey extension has been added at each end of the original cottage, matching and elongating its single room depth. The earliest of these is constructed in cob at the western end. The second, projecting out from the original eastern gable end, appears likely to have been constructed in brick under painted render. It is a single room accessible externally from a south facing door and with no internal link to the rest of the cottage. The thatched roof over the whole building has an amorphous hipped form with slopes ascending to a block cut ridge with a decorative ligger.
7. The cottage has a full width inglenook fireplace with seating areas across the eastern end of the original building. A very steep timber staircase from the western room gives access to the two bedrooms in the roof space. Each of these has a front facing eyebrow dormer, positioned above the ground floor windows, and set within the thatch, each with a pair of four-light casements and glazed side lights. The ground floor rear elevation has two triangular bay windows with shingle roofs and two small fixed casements.
8. Having regard to all the evidence before me, and from my own observations during my visit to the appeal site, I consider that the building's special architectural and historic interest derives mainly from the original linear plan form which is still clearly legible, its historic features, including the sizeable inglenook fireplace, the significant proportion of remaining historic fabric, and the extent to which the cottage reflects the economic and cultural smallholder tradition in the New Forest area, including the use of locally sourced construction materials. All of these factors are integral and important to the building's significance as a designated heritage asset.
9. The proposal would add a 1.5 storey rectangular extension projecting outwards at right angles from the rear of the cottage. It would provide a living area and toilet at ground floor with a new staircase giving access to its first floor landing and en-suite bedroom. The main part of the extension would be constructed in clay brick to the lower half of the flank walls with the upper halves finished in vertically hung Welsh slate to match the roof which would be shallow pitched with a gable end. This main part, as described, would be linked to the cottage at ground and first floor by a glazed infill.

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<sup>1</sup> APP/B9506/W/15/3138389

10. At ground floor the full width west-east glazed infill would provide internal access into the cottage through two new openings formed from the replacement of two existing rear elevation windows. This would also internally integrate the existing small eastern extension with the rest of the cottage. Additionally, some modern partitions in the western end room would be removed and a new door added to the western end of the rear elevation.
11. At first floor a narrow-width glazed corridor with flat roof is proposed. It would be stepped down from the ridge height of the main part of the extension, and would link the first floor of the extension through to the cottage's first floor eastern bedroom. This would require the removal of a section of thatch and supporting roof structure. This first floor link, by way of the new staircase in the extension, would give an alternative access to the existing bedrooms in the cottage, thereby removing the need to use the historic steep staircase, which would be retained.
12. Taken in isolation, the length of the extension projecting out from the rear wall of the cottage would not be excessive. However, at odds with the historic linear plan form it would have a significantly wider span than the existing cottage. Additionally, the eaves of the main part of the extension would be prominently higher than existing, and its maximum ridge height would be only slightly lower than the height of the cottage. Taking all these factors together, I consider that the proposal would result in an extension of excessive size and bulk. As such, it would be overly dominant and at odds with the small scale, low height and restrained proportions of the cottage. It would also be incongruent with the cottage's historic plan form and use of locally sourced materials. It would thus fail to preserve the special interest and significance of the listed building.
13. I acknowledge that the ground and first floor glazed element of the proposal has sought to create the impression of the main part of the extension as being a separate building. However, I consider that the main part of the extension, even if it were a truly separate building in the same position, would nonetheless still have a height, bulk and presence which would detract from the low level and small scale composition of the cottage. The glazed element does not therefore alleviate the harm I have identified.
14. As previously described there would also be some loss of historic fabric in creating the ground and first floor links. Given that I have found the proposal to be harmful for the reasons I have previously set out, the loss of the historic fabric would also be unjustified, thereby also failing to preserve the special interest and significance of the listed building.
15. The parties disagree on the total amount of habitable floor space that would result from the proposal, and I note the second part of Policy DP11 refers to design considerations and special circumstances for listed buildings, and permits a maximum total floorspace of 120m<sup>2</sup>. However, regardless of whether the resulting floorspace is below (or above) this figure, the first part of Policy DP11 only permits extensions that *are appropriate to the existing dwelling*. The rationale for this is set out in the policy's supporting text which includes in the interest of protecting the locally distinctive character of the New Forest. Thus, if a proposal is not appropriate, as I have found to be the case here, the quantum of floorspace is inconsequential.
16. Consequently, for the above reasons, I find that the proposed extension would result in harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset and to the

character of the New Forest National Park. It would thereby conflict with DPD<sup>2</sup> Policies DP1, DP11, CP7 and CP8 which, amongst other matters, require new development to be appropriate and sympathetic in terms of scale and appearance, and which protect, maintain or enhance nationally important features of the built environment, including local vernacular buildings.

17. In terms of paragraph 134 of the Framework<sup>3</sup> the harm would be less than substantial such that any public benefits flowing from the proposal should be weighed against the harm.
18. There is no dispute between the parties that the optimum viable use of the building would be as a residential dwelling. I take the same view. The house has been unoccupied for some years and requires refurbishment to bring it to a habitable standard commensurate with modern living conditions. The proposed extension, as part of such refurbishment works, would therefore be a public benefit in securing the building's long term use and viability. However, I am unconvinced that viable residential use of the building, which would also contribute in meeting the Council's identified need for housing in the New Forest, could not be secured without resulting in the harm I have identified. Thus the weight I attach to this benefit is reduced.

### **Conclusion**

19. I conclude overall that the proposed extension would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the grade II listed building. The public benefits of the proposal would not outweigh the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset. It would thus conflict with the Act, the policies of the Framework, and DPD Policies DP1, DP11, CP7 and CP8.
20. For all the above reasons, and taking account of all other matters raised, the appeals are dismissed.

*Thomas Shields*

INSPECTOR

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<sup>2</sup> New Forest National Park Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2010)

<sup>3</sup> National Planning Policy Framework (2012)