

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Development and Conservation Control Committee 4th January 2006
AUTHOR/S: Director of Development Services

S/1888/05/LB - Newton

Alterations to Front Porch Including Removal of Thatch and Re-roofing with Natural Quarried slate at 82 Whittlesford Road, For Newton Farms

Recommendation: Approval
Date for Determination: 29th November 2005

Listed Building

The applicant is a member of the Council.

Site and Proposal

1. The site is a grade II listed two storey detached dwelling, dated 1852. The building is constructed of clay lump and coated with rough cast render. It has a longstraw thatch roof and a thatched, central gable porch. The property occupies a narrow garden and faces north onto the street. It is accessed by a short path from Whittlesford Road, consequently the front elevation and porch are both prominent in the streetscene.
2. The property includes modern 20th century windows and to the western gable is a single storey lean-to addition, dating from the same period. The thatched porch is clearly in poor condition and projects through the projecting thatched eaves of the main thatched roof.
3. The application submitted on 4th October 2005 is to remove the thatch to the porch and replace it with natural slate.

Planning History

4. There is no relevant planning history relating to this property.

Planning Policy

5. **Policy EN23** of the 2004 Local Plan states that the Council will use its planning powers to preserve the character of the roofs of listed buildings which are of traditional materials.
6. Paragraph 10.59 of **Policy EN20** of the 2004 Local Plan states that the repair, renovation or alteration of historic buildings must not destroy the evidence of a building's historical development by unnecessary change.
7. **Policy P7/6** of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 ("The County Structure Plan") requires development to protect and enhance the quality and distinctiveness of the historic environment.

Consultation

8. **Newton Parish Council** recommends approval but stated that:
“The Council has not reached a consensus on this application. One view is that the main façade of this listed building should be maintained. Another view is that it is a relatively minor change and not material”

Representations

9. None received.

Planning Comments – Key Issues

10. The proposal is to alter part of the main elevation of this listed building. In considering such proposals the authority is required to both consider the impact on the historic building (which in this instance comprises a loss of historic material and a change to the character and appearance of the cottage) and the reasons why these works are “desirable or necessary”. No justification or evidence has been submitted to support this proposal and enable appropriate consideration to be given to this proposal.
11. It is evident that the porch is contemporary to the building, but there is no evidence to determine whether it was originally thatched and none has been provided.
12. However, the relatively squat angle of the pitch of its roof, at approximately 42 degrees, may suggest that it was not originally thatched. This angle of pitch would be better suited for a contrasting thatch, such as reed, which is not considered to be appropriate to this longstraw thatched property.
13. Similarly the thatched porch includes some rather unfortunate details. The thatched porch cuts through the eaves to the main roof, resulting in rainwater being channelled from the main roof onto the porch, no doubt contributing to its poor condition. It should be noted that while there are many examples of thatched porch structures, these usually conform to the necessity to have simple detailing, avoiding channels where possible and steep pitches.
14. Given the date of the property, it is considered at least possible that the porch was originally constructed to have a roof material that was other than thatch, although in the absence of any clear evidence this must remain speculation. The proposal to alter the roof material to slate will enable the porch to be lowered and be located underneath an uninterrupted eaves line of the main roof, potentially restoring the simplicity and appropriate detailing of the main roof.
15. The change to a slate roof is, therefore, neither considered to be historically inaccurate nor to detract from the character or appearance of this property and is consequently recommended for approval.

Recommendation

16. It is recommended that the application is approved subject to the following conditions:
 1. Standard Condition A – Time limited permission (Reason A) – 3 years.

2. Before work commences, arrangements shall be made by the applicant to enable the Local Planning Authority's Conservation Officer to meet the owner and/or agent and contractor on site to discuss the conditions of this consent and the manner of the works.
(Reason – For the avoidance of doubt and to ensure the proper control of works.)
3. A sample of the proposed roof slates shall be provided on site for the prior written approval of the Local Planning Authority.
(Reason – To ensure the use of roofing material appropriate to this listed building.)

Reasons for Approval

1. Although the proposal will involve the alteration to the listed building it is considered that the change to the porch roof will not significantly detract from the historic character of the building and will resolve a practical problem. The development is, therefore, considered generally to accord with the Development Plan and particularly the following policies:
 - **Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003: P7/6**
(Historic Built Environment);
 - **South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004: EN23** (Roofs)
2. The development is not considered to be significantly detrimental to the following material planning considerations which have been raised during the consultation exercise:
 - Visual impact on the locality

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003
- Planning File Ref: S/1888/05/LB

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