

Heritage Statement 2019/1076

1. The immediate site area

The site buildings consist of Leapings cottage itself and a former barn sited a short distance across a common yard south of the cottage. Both of these buildings have detailed planning approval for works to convert to domestic use including a new small tower attached to the western side of the cottage and recently built containing a bathroom and additional staircase between the three floor levels including the basement adjacent to Leapings lane (2017/1064). None of the structures are listed.

To the west of the development site within a clear curtilage is a listed weavers house, first listed in April 1988. Listing NGR 2282203183. This house was restored, by the family currently dealing with the adjacent cottage and barn, to a very high standard. Although this late C18/early C19 building does not share the common circulation or garden areas of the cottage or barn the council design & conservation officer considers that these buildings are within the zone of influence of the listed property.

2. Previous proposal

A previous proposal envisaged linking the cottage and the barn residential elements (2018/0738) by a largely glazed link in high quality materials to enable both the main residential elements to function as one larger housing unit to accommodate extended families or groups of friends to share the accommodation with greater flexibility and be particularly child friendly as internal movements could be overseen and controlled.

This proposal was rejected because of the perceived impact on the setting of the listed house. This view was supported by the Planning Inspectorate in an Appeal decision 28 January 2019 (App/R4408/W/18/3209651)

3. Current proposal

The current proposal absorbs the view of the council and addresses the decision of the Appeal System by a major change in the way the business model can be delivered. The owner believes it is essential to link the cottage and barn conversion physically for marketing reasons. The proposal has been briefly discussed with the conservation officer prior to the application.

Essentially the link will be underground across the yard area exiting from the existing barn via a stone built porch and entering the cottage at basement level in the newly built tower to the west gable. The underground element is designed to be visually comfortable for users and avoids a "corridor" feeling by its configuration and natural lighting at entry points with internal opportunity for attractive lighting arrangements.

The arrangement deals with the view of the Inspectorate in respect of paras 7-10. The only new element is the stone built small porch on the barn now lit on entry by the typically small window openings referred to in para 10. The individuality of each building would be retained (para 11).

The Inspector stated his views on the setting of the listed building (which was restored with great care by the owner and believed the above ground link did affect the overall

setting of the listed house. He did also state (para 20) that it would amount to, “less than substantial harm” to the significance of the heritage asset in the language of the Framework.

The agreed benefits arising from the previous application for an above ground link would be modest but not outweigh the “less than substantial” harm to the listed asset.

The new proposal delivers an expensive solution to the link but does not visually link the two structures. The staircase entrance is in matching materials with appropriate fenestration and small in scale. The owner of the buildings is prepared to absorb the cost of the structure underground as it delivers aspects of the high end accommodation proven elsewhere to be essential to attract the largest users.

Use of the buildings when complete will attract good tourism business to the area and bring disused structures into new use. The underground link will add a unique dimension to the properties and will not in any adverse way affect the listed buildings on land close by. The overall group of buildings will provide an asset to the area and be consistent with the nationally recognised desire to bring such buildings into appropriate use.

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