

REPORT FOR DECISION

Agenda Item	
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MEETING: PLANNING CONTROL COMMITTEE

DATE: 18 SEPTEMBER 2007

SUBJECT: BRADSHAW HEAD FARMHOUSE AND BARN, AFFETSID

REPORT FROM: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR (PLANNING, ENGINEERING AND
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES)

CONTACT OFFICER: M NIGHTINGALE, CONSERVATION OFFICER

TYPE OF DECISION: Non-key decision

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION/
STATUS:** In the public domain

SUMMARY:

In July 2007 Planning Control Committee considered a Listed Building Consent application (47981) for the re-roofing of Bradshaw Head farmhouse and attached barn. Committee approved the application but requested a report explaining the background to the application and particularly the judgements and assessment that officers' made in reaching the conclusion to recommend approval. The options and assessments are outlined in this report together with background on national guidance for the repair and control of listed buildings. In using Bradshaw Head as an example, the report tries to respond to some general questions about listed building issues that Committee raised at its meeting in July 2007. The Council's Conservation Officer will be available at the meeting to respond to any additional questions.

OPTIONS AND RECOMMENDED OPTION (with reasons):

To note or comment on the report.

IMPLICATIONS -

Corporate Aims/Policy Framework: Do the proposals accord with the Policy Framework? Yes No

Financial Implications and Risk Considerations Director of Finance and E-Government to advise re risk management

**Statement by Director of Finance
and E-Government:**

Equality/Diversity implications

Yes No (see paragraph below)

Considered by Monitoring Officer:

Yes Comments

Are there any legal implications?

Yes No (see paragraph)

Staffing/ICT/Property:

Wards Affected:

Tottington

Scrutiny Interest:

TRACKING/PROCESS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR:

Chief Executive/ Management Board	Executive Member/ Chair	Ward Members	Partners
Scrutiny Commission	Executive	Committee	Council
		18 September 2007	

1.0 BACKGROUND

In July 2007 Planning Control Committee considered a Listed Building Consent application (47981) for the re-roofing of the listed farmhouse and attached barn. Committee approved the application but requested a report explaining the background to the application and particularly the judgements and assessment that officers' made in reaching the conclusion to recommend approval. Although each situation is different and should be dealt with on its individual merits, Bradshaw Head raises a number of issues that are central to listed building protection and control.

2.0 ISSUES

On the 24 August 2006 the Council's conservation officer wrote to the owner/occupier of the farm after a small roof collapse had been brought to his attention. The responsible parties were informed of the building's status and the need for repair work to be undertaken. Some scaffolding and propping work was carried out in September 2006. In December 2006 a report on the condition of the farm and barn roof was submitted to the Council and this was followed by a meeting on site in January 2006 to discuss the report's findings and inspect the building and roof.

From both the report and the inspection it was clear that the majority of the roof structure was in extremely poor condition through insect damage and rot due to the long-term ingress of water. Virtually all roof purlins and rafters

were damaged beyond use, with only two king-post trusses being usable following treatment and repair. The specialist report indicated that there was a danger of further roof failure in a number of areas. Externally the building walls looked to be in sound condition but there had been a longstanding lack of maintenance and repair to the roof. Internally, the property had undergone substantial alterations c 1950 when much of the internal features of interest had been removed. It appeared that little investment had been made in any part of the building for a long period and the interior required substantial funds to bring it up to current standards. The building was unoccupied at the time and the owner and the agent stated that there had been, and were, no funds available to invest in the building.

In summary, this was a listed building in need of urgent repair and restoration but with very little private money available to undertake the work.

Options and Recommendations

Through both listed building powers and negotiation the options available to the Council were as follows: -

- 1. Require the building to be re-roofed in re-used and reclaimed natural stone flags on a new truss and purlin roof structure all funded by the owner.**

Comment: If funding is available, this is the correct solution leading to no impact on the appearance and character of the building. In addition to roof repair, the residential part of the property requires upgrading to ensure that the building has a use that can sustain the maintenance of the building fabric in the future. The owner and the agent clearly stated that this was not an affordable option. The Council has no powers to require this level of work (full restoration) to be implemented by the owners (please see paragraph on repair of listed buildings below). A protracted negotiation in an attempt to achieve this solution may have resulted in further deterioration of the building's fabric.

- 2. As 1 above but with a listed building repair grant from the Council.**

Comment: Part of the problem with the roof was due to a lack of maintenance and investment over a long period. Under these circumstances, the conservation officer took the view that a grant may not be appropriate when there are other worthy schemes for listed buildings in need of grant support. The Council's annual budget for listed building grants is £15,000. The major part of this would have to be committed to this project to make the necessary impact on costs. Even so there would be no guarantee that this would be acceptable to the building owner and would achieve the desired end result. This would remove funds from other projects, some already in discussion, where the benefit in terms of the quality of the building and the impact of the works would be expected to be more significant. Due to the grading and quality of the building it does not qualify for any national sources of grant aid.

- 3. Negotiate an affordable scheme that was not to the detriment of the building's special architectural or historic interest.**

Comment: The initial proposal from the owner and agent put forward in pre-application discussion was to replace the roof structure in steel (or

alternatively to a modern trussed rafter design), remove the chimneys and re-roof in artificial materials or in natural slate. To make the scheme affordable it would be cross-funded by the sale of the usable stone flags to be removed from the roof. The loss of the chimneys and the introduction of a steel/trussed rafter design were rejected by the conservation officer as the changes would remove original building fabric and introduce non-traditional material and details without justification. In terms of the roof structure it was agreed that this would be replaced with new timber in line with the original roof design and incorporating the two king-post trusses suitably treated and repaired. The possibility of saving some additional timber material from the roof structure was, after consideration, rejected largely due to the risk of the continuing spread of infestation.

Stone flag roofs were commonplace in the north of the Borough until the early to mid 19th century. They were replaced with Welsh blue slate for new building during the 19th century as the national railway network developed. There is a 150-year tradition in the area for the replacement of stone flag with slate, and slate is accepted as a part of the Borough's character. Artificial roofing materials were considered for the works but these vary in appearance and tend to weather differently from natural materials. Artificial flags and Indian natural stone flags are available but these are not always a good match for the local material and in some instances are more expensive than reclaimed natural slate. The shippon attached to the farm and barn, and which was not proposed for re-roofing, already had a Welsh blue slate roof. Taking into account all the factors, the judgement was made that a reclaimed slate covering was, in these particular circumstances, an appropriate substitute roof covering.

Listed Building Control and Repair

In terms of the judgements made for Bradshaw Head farmhouse/barn, it is useful to refer to the national guidance on the control of alterations and the repair of listed buildings.

Listed Building Control

There is a single judgement for local authorities to make in considering applications for listed building consent, and that is whether the proposals **protect or enhance the character or appearance of the building**. Case law has confirmed that a scheme that causes no harm to a building's special character can be acceptable. However, in individual circumstances the simple test can become quite complex and the general rules will require interpretation in relation to proposed materials and scheme details. In addition, the character of a building can be related to its use and how that use operates. PPG15, Planning and the Historic Environment, outlines some issues that need to be considered in reaching judgements on listed building consent applications. A summary of this is -

- § The building's intrinsic character, rarity and importance
- § Particular features of importance
- § The building's contribution to the local scene
- § Any benefits resulting from the proposed works
- § Retaining the building in an appropriate and sustainable use
- § Retaining the building's special interest

The primary special interest of Bradshaw Head is in its external appearance, and its largely unaltered external walls, windows, doors and roof. The building is typical of late 18th century farmhouses in the north of the Borough. However, it is a fairly plain example and this type of building and is not rare. The change from stone flag to natural slate will mean some small loss in special character of the building but the judgement was made that this would be affordable and would provide the best and most direct chance of saving the building for the future.

Repair of Listed Buildings

Local authorities have powers to take action where a listed building has deteriorated to the extent that its preservation may be at risk. There are two options, (a) to serve a repairs notice on the owner requiring specific works to be undertaken and these must be reasonable for the building's preservation, and (b) carry out urgent works, after giving notice to the owner, to an unoccupied building, to stop collapse, secure the building or keep out rain etc. Neither option would have been appropriate during discussions on the proposed roof repair. However, their use may become necessary if no action is taken to implement the approved repair and the building's future is under threat. At the time of writing this report, no work has begun on the roof repair. Consequently, the matter has again been raised with the owner and the agent.

3.0 CONCLUSION

That the assessments and judgements made by officers are noted.

List of Background Papers:-

Listed Building Consent application 47981
Report to Planning Control Committee on the 24 July 2007
PPG15 Planning and the Historic Environment 1994.

Contact Details:-

M Nightingale
Conservation Officer
Tel 0161 253 5317
E-mail. m.nightingale@bury.gov.uk
