



Design & Access and Heritage Statement

1 The Old Cornmill, Gweek, TR12 6UD

Landscape works to rear of building

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Summary

This statement has been written to accompany a planning application for minor works involved with the landscaping of a narrow strip of land to the rear of the Old Cornmill to the south of Gweek. The building is occupied by flats and the land is in the ownership of no.1, the owners of which recently secured permission for landscaping works to the front of the property, which will significantly enhance the setting from the road, with bespoke metal railings and gate along the boundary. The proposed works to the rear are very minor in nature and will not be seen from public view, but lie within the curtilage of a listed building, and will complete the overall enhancement to the curtilage.

Location and Description of Site

The works relate to the curtilage of Number 1 The Old Cornmill, part of a substantial three storey, former mill of stone construction, which is grade II listed. The site lies on the hillside on the southern approach to the village of Gweek, forming part of a cluster of buildings that is detached from the main village.

The property occupies the ground floor of the northern end of the L shaped building, with a private courtyard on its east side adjacent to the road, which provides the main garden area to number 1. To the west, the building is set into the hillside with a sloping strip of land running between the building and the western boundary, which tapers and slopes away to its northern end. There is a steep drop from the boundary to the neighbouring land to the west and north, and the neighbouring property has recently erected a new timber fence along their boundary, however there is a still a drop at the northern end of the land, between this fence and the Old Cornmill, as shown below.



Figure 1: Rear yard tapering to northern end where there is a drop.

Proposed Development

A means of enclosure within the curtilage of a listed building is not permitted development, and it is proposed to enclose the narrow northern end of the rear yard with a section of some Cornish wall (Cornish hedge), which will be little more than a metre in length but is required for safety reasons and would be a visual and ecological enhancement, in contrast to a further section of fence. The new wall will not be fixed to the listed building and so does not require listed building consent. It is also necessary to improve the steps into the area with uniform granite steps replacing the uneven surface that currently exists with haphazard paving steps and slabs. These steps would be set adjacent to the stone wall of the porch. Other works relate to landscaping in the form of planting, and granite and slate chippings, which would not require consent.

It is considered that while the stone wall is a means of enclosure requiring planning permission, the other works would either not constitute development, or in the case of replacement steps, may be permitted development. If a handrail is required for the steps, it is understood that this would not be attached to the wall of the mill, but would be on the boundary side, and would not require listed building consent.

Although the works are very minor, the applicants wish to secure planning permission for the avoidance of doubt regarding the lawfulness of any works they undertake around the listed building. As no works would be fixed to the listed building and would not affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, listed building consent would not be required in this case (Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990).

Design and Access Statement

The external area is for the sole use of Flat 1 and is accessed via irregular steps adjacent to the porch on the west side of the building. The area is approached from the communal car park area to the west down a gentle slope. The new steps will improve accessibility to the area for the use of the Applicants.

The use of granite steps, gravel and slate surfacing and a small section of traditional Cornish stone walling will provide an obvious enhancement to this part of the curtilage, using traditional materials that are sympathetic to the building.

Green Infrastructure Statement

The site is relatively sterile from an ecology perspective, largely consisting of a small area of bare ground. The proposed Cornish hedge and hedge planting will introduce an enhancement to ecology, albeit over a very small area. Flora and fauna will become established in the new stone wall and in the form of the planted hedge. These will in turn help connect the site to trees and hedges to the west.

Heritage Statement

A review of the Heritage record has identified that although there are other designated assets in the area, such as the grade II listed lodge across the road to the east, the location of the works and their limited scale means no other assets will be affected. The extent of works themselves are also not considered to require listed building consent as they will not be attached to the building or curtilage structures and will not affect the special character of the listed Corn Mill. The following legislation and policies have been considered.

Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

Works affecting Listed Buildings or structures are subject to additional planning controls administered by LPAs under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. In considering development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, the LPA must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses (Section 66).

National Planning Policy Framework.

The Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Section 16 covers the Historic environments and within this, paragraph 194 sets out the requirements for applications affecting heritage assets, stating, "In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary. Where a site on which development is proposed includes, or has the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation".

Paragraph 197 is also relevant, stating, "In determining applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

When considering potential impacts, paragraph 199 advises that "great weight should be given to the asset's conservation (and the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be)."

Cornwall Local Plan

Policy 24, which relates to the Historic Environment, states: "Development proposals will be permitted where they would sustain the cultural distinctiveness and significance of Cornwall's historic rural, urban and coastal environment by protecting, conserving and where appropriate enhancing the significance of designated and non-designated assets and their settings".

In addition, the Policy states, "Development proposals will be expected to sustain designated heritage assets and take opportunities to better reveal their significance."

The Old Cornmill

The list description reads:

"Former corn mill now converted to accommodation. Circa early C19, remodelled circa 1970's. Shale rubble walls with granite quoins, jambstones and lintels. Asbestos slate roof, hipped at either end of south range, gable end at north and to single storey wing at east. Irregular L-shaped plan with original rectangular range (south), extended soon after with wide oblique-ended wing and at rear left and with single storey oblique ended wing, right. Restored wheel incorporated at

the left hand end. Three-storeys. South front retains some original openings, some blocked or partly blocked and some new ones cut when converted. Loading doorway to 2nd floor towards left with hoist dormer has been altered to create more windows. The other elevations display similar mixture of original and new openings, the right hand (east) wall of rear wing mostly rebuilt. Interior not inspected. Though altered in the C20, much of the former mill structure remains, a particularly large mill for Cornwall.”

The building was first listed in 1975 and despite some remodelling before and after making the use of the appear obviously residential, the scale and surviving features noted in the listing clearly still demonstrate the building’s original function.

The proposed works to the rear would have no bearing on the character or appearance of the building or its setting, being out of public view and improving the informal rear amenity space, with works that would be entirely in keeping and sensitive.

Conclusion

The proposed works represent an enhancement to the setting of the listed building, albeit in a private small area away from view. The works will make the area of curtilage a more useable area of amenity space that will also be of some modest value in terms of ecological enhancement.

The proposals would accord with the aims and intentions of the relevant policies of the Cornwall Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework and should therefore be approved without delay.