
HERITAGE STATEMENT

Proposed Extensions to Combine The Old Mill and The Stables

at Knights Mill Cottage, Knights Mill Hill,
St Teath, Bodmin

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared by Stephen Bradwell, MA MRTPI IHBC, to inform a planning application for the erection of a two storey extension at Knights Mill Cottage to link two existing buildings (*The Old Mill* with *The Stables*) to form an enlarged dwellinghouse, as shown on the plans prepared by Swain Architecture.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires applicants to provide a statement that describes *'the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting...proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance'* [para. 194] (*my emphasis*).
- 1.3 To meet the requirements of the NPPF the purpose of this statement is to review the significance of the buildings at Knights Mill Cottage and to assess the potential impact of the proposed development having regard to the relevant national and local planning policies.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The following sources of information have been used to identify the heritage assets within the locality:
- historic Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping;
 - relevant designation records from Historic England's *Heritage List for England*;
 - information on Conservation Areas was obtained from Cornwall Council's web site;
 - the Historic Environment Record (HER) was also accessed via the Heritage Gateway.

3.0 SITE DESCRIPTION AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

- 3.1 The application site is located on the north side of Knights Mill Hill (near the junction of the B3267 with the A39) within a small cluster of residential and commercial properties to the south-east of St Teath, where there is a mix of buildings of various styles and periods.
- 3.2 The property itself comprises of three separate buildings, a principal two storey dwelling occupied by the applicants that is situated towards the front of the site (*The*

Old Mill), which is rendered and covered by a slate roof, with a two further detached buildings. These comprise a single storey building situated to the side of the principal house and a two storey building to the rear (known as *The Bungalow* and *The Stables* respectively), each built with a mix of stone and rendered walls with slate roofs, and these have most recently been let out for holiday use. It is however the case that all three buildings are in need of significant repair and refurbishment.

4.0 SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Following advice from the local planning authority via a pre-application enquiry these proposals relate to the erection of a two storey extension that is intended to provide a link between *The Old Mill* and *The Stables* (see Figure 1). The extension comprises of two distinct elements, a two storey extension to the east-facing gable of *The Stables* with a further two storey extension at 90° to the rear of *The Old Mill* to provide the link extension.

4.2 *The Bungalow* is unaffected by these proposals and is therefore given no further consideration in this report.



Figure 1: View of *The Old Mill* and *The Stables* showing the location of the proposed extensions and the residential character of the existing buildings

5.0 PREVIOUS PLANNING HISTORY

- 5.1 Whilst there is no relevant previous planning history, the local planning authority has responded to a recent pre-application enquiry proposing two development options:
- (i) the provision of an extension to link *The Old Mill* and *The Stables*; or
 - (ii) the demolition of *The Old Mill* and *The Stables* for the construction of a replacement dwelling.
- 5.2 The Heritage Consultation response to these proposals recognised that these buildings should be treated as non-designated heritage assets (NDHA), and consequently it was opposed to the loss of the existing buildings for the construction of a new replacement dwelling. However, there was support, in principle, for a proposed extension that retained the fabric and form of the existing buildings, and would also be subservient in height to the existing buildings so that the new elements could be read separately from the original buildings without competing with or compromising their significance. The retention of the water wheel attached to *The Old Mill* was also welcomed.

6.0 HISTORICAL APPRAISAL OF THE PROPERTY

- 6.1 The property was originally part of a corn mill, recorded on the HER (see para. 8.5 below) and the details shown on the 1888 Ordnance Survey (OS) map indicate that the site at that time comprised of four buildings (see Figure 1 below). *The Old Mill*, now occupied as the principal dwellinghouse, stood towards the centre of the site with a water wheel extension on its southern elevation that was fed by a mill leat that ran along the western side of the site.
- 6.2 Two further buildings stood alongside the mill, a small building along the road frontage to the south of the mill that has now been demolished (shown as *Building B* on Figure 1), and a separate building to the east, now referred to as *The Bungalow*.
- 6.3 A further building stood to the north-west of the mill (shown as *Building A* on Figure 1), but it is not clear whether this is the surviving building on the site now referred to as *The Stables*. The building shown on the 1888 OS map was built on a north-south axis whereas the existing building has an east-west axis. The later 1907 OS map also shows a building attached to the southern elevation of the original building to form an L-shaped floor plan, that again does not appear to exist on the site (see Figure 2 below).

6.4 It is however evident that, notwithstanding their previous use, these buildings now have an inherently residential character and appearance that belies their original purpose (see Figure 1). The only surviving feature of the old corn mill of any note is a water wheel attached to the southern gable of *The Old Mill*, which the applicants have restored back to working condition.

7.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

The Development Plan

Cornwall Local Plan

7.1 Policy 24: *Historic Environment* is the most relevant policy relating to the historic environment and this policy notes amongst other things that any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset must be justified, and proposals causing harm will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal and are expected to mitigate the extent of any harm to the significance of the asset.

7.2 However it is the case that the provisions of Policy 24 as they apply to a NDHA are not consistent with the provisions of the NPPF. A recent High Court decision has concluded that in considering proposals affecting buildings that are not formally listed, *'all that is required by paragraph 135 (now paragraph 203 of the revised NPPF) in respect of a non-designated heritage asset is that the effect of an application on the significance of the asset should be taken into account'* (para. 44, Travis Perkins (Properties) Limited v Westminster City Council & Others, [2017] EWHC 2738).

7.3 As the buildings at Knights Mill Cottage are not formally listed it therefore follows that the policy guidance referred to in paragraphs 199 - 202 of the NPPF, which specifically relates to designated heritage assets, are not engaged. Consequently, in determining these proposals:

- the requirement to give 'great weight' to the asset's conservation does not apply [para. 199];
- there is no need for the applicant to provide a clear and convincing justification for any degree of harm [para. 200];
- the degrees of 'substantial harm' and 'less than substantial harm' and the associated tests of public benefits are not applicable [paras. 201 - 202];
- there is no need to address optimum viable use [para. 202].

National Planning Policy Framework [NPPF]

7.4 The NPPF is also an important material consideration in the determination of this planning application and it recognises that heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance [para. 189]. Heritage assets are defined in Annex 2 as: *'a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest'* and this includes both designated heritage assets and other non-designated assets identified by the local planning authority. Annex 2 clarifies that the significance of a heritage asset relates to its archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic interest and its setting.

7.5 When considering development proposals affecting a NDHA, paragraph 203 states: *The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.*

Other Material Considerations***Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)***

7.6 The PPG provides further guidance on development within the historic environment and in respect of a NDHA it recognises that only a minority of buildings have enough heritage significance to merit identification as a NDHA (Paragraph: 039 Reference ID: 18a-039-20190723 Revision date: 23 07 2019), but it makes clear that the identification of a NDHA *'should be based on sound evidence'* (Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723 Revision date: 23 07 2019).

7.7 The PPG also expands on the NPPF's definition of heritage significance, namely:

- archaeological interest: an interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.
- architectural and artistic interest: an interest in the design and general aesthetics of a place. They can arise from conscious design or fortuitously from the way the heritage asset has evolved. More specifically, architectural interest is an interest in the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and

decoration of buildings and structures of all types. Artistic interest is an interest in other human creative skill, like sculpture.

- historic interest: an interest in past lives and events (including pre-historic). Heritage assets can illustrate or be associated with them. Heritage assets with historic interest not only provide a material record of our nation's history, but can also provide meaning for communities derived from their collective experience of a place and can symbolise wider values such as faith and cultural identity.

(Paragraph: 006 Reference ID: 18a-006-20190723 Revision date: 23 07 2019).

Historic England: Making Changes to Heritage Assets Historic England Advice Note 2 (HEAN2)

- 7.8 Para. 41 of HEAN2 notes that issues for consideration in proposals for additions to heritage assets, include proportion, height, massing, bulk, use of materials, relationship with adjacent assets. Further noting that it would not normally be good practice for new work to dominate the original asset or its setting in either scale, material or as a result of its siting.

8.0 SUMMARY OF LOCAL HERITAGE ASSETS

Listed Buildings

- 8.1 The existing property is not listed; the closest listed building is the Grade II listed The Cottage which lies on the southern side of the B3267. This cottage is described as a mid-17th century to early 18th century house, composed of rendered cob on slate rubble footings.

- 8.2 Given the relative distance between this Grade II listed building and Knights Mill Cottage and the overall scope and nature of these proposals it is considered that this listed building will not be affected by these proposals.

Historic Parks and Gardens & Scheduled Monuments

- 8.3 There are no Registered Historic Parks and Gardens or scheduled monuments within the vicinity of the site.

Conservation Area

- 8.4 The site lies outside of any designated Conservation Area and there are no Conservation Areas within the vicinity of the site.

Historic Environment Record

- 8.5 Of the three buildings on the site only *The Old Mill* is identified by the HER (*ref. 17853*), and this describes the property as follows:
KNIGHTSMILL - Medieval corn mill, Post Medieval corn mill.

Knightsmill is first recorded in 1337 but the Institute of Cornish Studies say the original mill may have been in Michaelstow (across the river from the present site) (b6).

Grain mill in the period 1796-1893 (10).

In 1856, Knightsmill was occupied by W Tremain (b1). Symons describes it as a flour mill (b3). The 2nd Edition 1:2500 OS map records a leat upstream taking water from the River Allen. Two launders appear to serve the building, suggesting the presence of two water wheels, and a single tailrace directs waste water back to the river. In 1923 the mill was occupied by S Bastard (b5).

Residence by 1972, but a waterwheel about 12' dia. Survives in a shed, and new owners have cleared the leat (10).

9.0 HERITAGE ASSESSMENT*Assessment of Heritage Interest*

- 9.1 As is evident from the above, the group of buildings at Knights Mill Cottage are not listed and they are not associated with any listed building, nor does the site fall within the boundaries of any Conservation Area.
- 9.2 However, given that *The Old Mill* is referred to by the HER, it is reasonable to conclude that this building merits some consideration in the planning process as a NDHA in accordance with the relevant local and national planning policies (see paras. 7.1 - 7.5 above). Using the definitions of significance outlined in the PPG, which are consistent with the definition of 'significance' provided by the NPPF, it seems reasonable to regard *The Old Mill* as having some archaeological interest given

its original function as a corn mill, which provides evidence of past human activity, and some historic interest given its associations with the local community. The building also has some architectural interest, largely relating to its overall built form and materials of construction, but the removal of most features relating to its original function as a result of its previous conversion to a residential use has seriously diminished its architectural interest.

- 9.3 However similar considerations would not appear to apply to *The Stables*. This building is not identified on the HER and the available mapping evidence suggests that the present building is a replacement for one of the original mill buildings (see para. 6.3 above). It is therefore difficult to conclude that *The Stables* merits consideration as a NDHA.

Impact of the Proposed Development

- 9.4 Planning permission is sought for the erection of an L-shaped extension comprising of a two storey extension to the end gable of *The Stables*, to be finished in render to contrast with the stone of the existing building. A further, two storey extension, at 90° degrees to *The Stables* extension, would then provide a link to *The Old Mill*. The link extension has been designed as a lightweight structure with predominantly glazed walls within an oak frame, in contrast to the rendered walls of *The Old Mill*, and it also has a reduced ridge height such that this extension sits below the eaves of the gable of *The Old Mill*.
- 9.5 The considered approach to the overall scale, design and materials palette promotes a high quality of design that is sympathetic to the scale and form of the existing buildings and generally accords with the advice given in HEAN2 (see para. 7.8 above). It ensures that the proposed extensions are seen as distinct and contemporary additions to the existing buildings, maintaining the legibility and relative hierarchy of the original buildings on the site with *The Old Mill*, as the original asset, continuing to be seen as the principal building on the site.
- 9.6 The proposals also offer the opportunity to make beneficial use of the water wheel attached to *The Old Mill* by using it to generate sustainable energy, and this would serve to enhance its overall significance as a post-Medieval corn mill.

10.0 CONCLUSION

- 10.1 This heritage statement in assessing the heritage interest of the two buildings affected by these proposals has provided the evidence necessary for the identification of the Old Mill as a NDHA as advised by the PPG (see para. 7.6 above), whilst *The Stables* lack the necessary degree of heritage interest to be regarded as a NDHA.
- 10.3 Therefore, from the analysis of these buildings it is my professional opinion that given their scope and nature, the proposed extensions will retain the existing character and appearance of the existing buildings, avoiding any harm to their significance, particularly to the original mill building which is the principal element of heritage interest on this site. Consequently, the 'balanced judgement' test set out in para. 203 of the NPPF can be fully discharged and these proposals and will not conflict with the objectives of Local Plan Policy 24 in so far as they relate to a NDHA.

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