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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 May 2012

by **David Morgan BA MA (IoAAS) MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11 June 2012

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**Appeal Ref: APP/B1225/E/11/2165202**

**1 Serrell's Mead Cottages, Langton Matravers, Swanage, Dorset BH19 3HU**

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
  - The appeal is made by Mr Matthew Haysom against the decision of Purbeck District Council.
  - The application Ref 6/2011/0387, dated 31 May 2011, was refused by notice dated 8 August 2011.
  - The works proposed are replace spring balanced, sliding sash windows with hardwood painted white weighted sliding sash windows, to front elevation.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. Whether the proposed works would preserve the Grade II listed building known as 1 Serrell's Mead Cottages or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses, and if it does not, whether there are any public benefits that would outweigh such harm to that special interest.

### Procedural matters

3. On the 27 March 2012 the Government published the National Planning Policy Framework (henceforth referred to as '*The Framework*'). The parties have been consulted on and have responded to the document and this has been taken fully into account in the reasoning below.
4. The appellant submitted additional details with the appeal documents not determined by the Council, specifically a detailed section of the existing and proposed glazing bar profiles. As these details only give greater definition to the submitted drawings, their acceptance would not compromise the interests of those parties with a view on the proposals. On this basis I have taken them into account in the determination of the appeal.

### Reasons

5. The list description identifies nos 1 and 2 Serrell's Mead as a pair of cottages, most likely dating from the early C19th. Anecdotally it has been suggested that the pair were formally a single farmhouse associated with a now lost farmstead, and together with some simple indoor carpentry details, this may suggest an earlier, possibly C18th date for the structure. Notwithstanding this matter, the character and special architectural interest of the pair are defined by their essentially linear plan form, use of vernacular materials and the formal

arrangement of their conjoined front elevation, each element comprising two bays defined by sash windows to both floors. These are broadly uniform in proportion, each window comprising two 8X8 pane sashes.

6. There is no dispute that the four existing windows in the front elevation of no 1 are modern fixtures fabricated in painted softwood and incorporating spring balanced mechanisms. It is evident that these windows have been repaired in the past, with extensively elements of the sashes and their boxes having been replaced. Despite these diligent efforts of conservative repair, these fixtures are much decayed, and there can be little doubt that they are well beyond any reasonable means of repair. There is no issue therefore with the principle of their replacement, but rather with the form and detail of those replacements.
7. The proposed replacement windows are to be fabricated in hardwood and painted white. They feature individual sealed units set into functional glazing bars, each unit being a total of 12mm in depth. The units are secured within the glazing bars with putty to replicate the traditional single glazed arrangement. They would also have sash weights, accommodated within traditional box frames.
8. As far as traditionally configured modern double glazed units go, these 'Slimlite' fixtures offer amongst the closest approximations to traditionally fabricated historic window types available. Their principal distinguishing advantage being the employment of the functional glazing bars, a considerable improvement on those with sandwiched dividers within the unit and with profiled strips applied to their inner and outer faces. However, despite this achievement, it is the *apparency* of the double glazed units, with their visible parting bead and the double register of the two planes of glass in each one that identify them as modern fixtures, critically undermining the integrity, character, and so special architectural interest and significance of the listed building (the heritage asset).
9. Moreover, from the details supplied with the appeal documents, it is apparent that the central external nib of the glazing bar would be 16mm in depth to replicate as closely as possible the profile of the existing glazing bars in the adjacent cottage (14mm). With the 12mm depth of the sealed units, this would only leave a 4mm nib to accommodate the securing putty, either a very small section of traditionally profiled putty, or one splayed over the face of the unit to secure it. In either case this detail would be both incongruous and conspicuous, compounding the adverse impact on special interest and significance identified above, and so resulting in substantial harm to its significance. Such an outcome would fail to preserve the special architectural interest of the building, the desirability of which is fully anticipated by the Act, and one contrary to the expectations of paragraph 132 of the Framework, which asserts that great weight should be given to the heritage asset's conservation. It would also be contrary to local development plan policy, both being in conformity with, and underpinning, these statutory and policy objectives.
10. The justification for the choice of windows is to achieve a significant increase in the thermal performance, an objective in accordance with national policy to achieve greater degrees of energy efficiency to address climate change, and an objective also recognised in paragraph 93 of The Framework; in this context, as a public benefit, the proposals should be afforded significant weight. However, The Framework also makes clear in paragraph 133 that consent

should only be granted where these public benefits would outweigh the harm to the significance of the asset. In this case, although there would be a modest increase in thermal performance of the dwelling overall, this would be significantly outweighed by the substantial harm to the special architectural interest and significance of the listed building. Such a conclusion is given added conviction through the absence of any evidence that alternative approaches to increasing thermal performance (other than standard secondary glazing) have been considered and assessed against the benefits of the appeal proposals.

11. The modern configuration of the windows consented in the rear wing of the house has been noted and considered. These are indeed inappropriate fixtures, in my view undermining the efforts made to architecturally integrate the rear extension with the main house. Regrettable though these may be, they are discreetly located at the rear of the property and do not seriously compromise the special interest of the building; neither do they form the basis of a justification for the fixtures proposed.
12. The appellant suggests that there are other examples where the 'Slimlite' fixtures are used, but supplies no details of the circumstances where they were apparently allowed. In the absence of this detail such evidence may only be afforded very limited weight as forms of precedent material to this case.
13. For the reasons given above, and having considered all matters raised, including the views of the Parish Council, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

*David Morgan*

**Inspector**

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