



Northumberland County Council

Building Conservation-Ecology-Archaeology MEMORANDUM

To: Jay Smith, Planning Officer

From: Val Robson, Building Conservation Officer

Date: 29/3/2019

Reference: 19NP0014

Address: Evistones Cottage, Rochester NE19 1RY

Proposal: Demolition of Existing Dwelling and Outbuildings and Construction of Replacement Dwelling and Outbuildings

Comments/Significance

Evistones Cottage is situated in a rural farming location in Redesdale within the setting of Evistones House to the south of Rochester, the A68 and the River Rede. Evistones Wood and Evistones Plantation provide the immediate physical context and the remains of the medieval village of Evistones lies to the west.

Evistones Cottage is a two storey stone built residential dwelling with associated traditional stone outbuildings and a more modern garage block and kennels. The cottage, which dates from the late 19th century, is thought to have been a Keeper's cottage associated with the hunting lodge of Evistones House.

The cottage is of two storeys built in coursed sandstone with dressed lintels, sills and quoins and has a Welsh slate roof. The rainwater gutters are mostly of cast iron. Windows are mainly timber double hung sliding sash, with some fixed side lights at ground floor level.

Evistones House is thought to have been built in 1860 by Sir Walter James as a shooting lodge (or hunting lodge) and was extended in 1878. It is of snecked stone with a Welsh slate roof and is constructed in a typical mid Victorian Tudor style with a highly irregular plan.

Both Evistones House and Evistones Cottage were first shown on Ordnance Survey mapping in 1897.

The plan-form of the current farmstead, which includes both Evistones House and Evistones Cottage, is irregular, perhaps reflecting the specialised nature of the origins as a hunting lodge and keepers cottage rather than a traditional farmstead.

The proposed works seek to replace Evistones Cottage and its associated outbuildings with a farmstead development arranged around a courtyard plan.

There are no listed buildings within the application site or its immediate setting. The nearest listed buildings are at Stobbs, to the north east of the site and consist of the grade II 17th century house and its separately grade II listed garden wall. There are also a number of listed buildings flanking the A68, which is the main routeway through the area and runs to the north east of the site. However the proposals are not considered to impact upon the setting of any of these heritage assets.

The Evistones estate, as examples of a late 19th hunting lodge and associated keepers cottage and outbuildings, are regarded as being a non-designated heritage asset.

The remains of the medieval village of Evistones to the north-west of the site is a Scheduled Monument.

Legislative Framework and Policy

The NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application.

Section 12 of the 2019 NPPF is about achieving well-designed places.

Paragraph 124 of section 12 advises that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities.

Paragraph 130 of section 12 advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

Paragraph 131 states that: “In determining applications, great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, so long as they fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings.”

In addition, section 16 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the 2019 NPPF is a material Planning consideration in the assessment of the application.

Paragraph 193 of the NPPF advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset’s conservation.

Paragraph 194 advises that any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification.

Paragraph 195 advises that where a proposed development will lead to substantial harm to (or total loss of

significance of) a designated heritage asset, local planning authorities should refuse consent, unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply: a) the nature of the heritage asset prevents all reasonable uses of the site; and b) no viable use of the heritage asset itself can be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that will enable its conservation; and c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of not for profit, charitable or public ownership is demonstrably not possible; and d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.

Paragraph 196 advises that where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.

Paragraph 197 advises that 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.

Historic England's Historic Environment Good Practice Advice in Planning: 3 The Setting of Heritage Assets 2015 should also be taken into consideration in the assessment of this proposal.

The guidance within Historic England's Advice Note 9: The Adaptive Reuse of Traditional Farm Buildings 2017 should also be taken into consideration.

Assessment of Development Proposals

The proposal is to demolish the existing cottage and outbuildings and erect a replacement dwelling with outbuildings within the same residential curtilage. The broad scale and design of the built form will be similar to the existing. The facades of the dwelling are to be of stone with stone quoins and a slate roof to match Evistones house. Where feasible, existing materials are to be used. Doors and windows are to be of painted hardwood with aluminium gutters and downpipes. A more modern glazed link and gable end is also proposed and this is considered to be acceptable in design terms, particularly as this contemporary glazing is limited to elevations facing away from the main cottage.

The buildings are to be arranged around a courtyard which is considered by the applicant to be more efficient operationally and is more in keeping with courtyard plans seen elsewhere in the region.

However this was not an intact historical farmstead and indeed was never designed as such. The proposed demolition of the cottage and its associated traditional outbuildings will result in the loss of a non designated heritage asset, as the cottage was a Game Keeper's cottage associated with Evistones House, which was a shooting/hunting lodge. These late 19th century buildings are of local significance given their traditional design, materials and character, historical usage and association with the overall estate, whose significance is as one of a number of such estates, many of which are now lost. The demolition of the cottage will disrupt the overall historical connection and group value of the estate, removing the association of the Keepers Cottage and its outbuildings, which were part of the working estate, with the main Hunting/Shooting Lodge.

The loss of the stables, which illustrate the importance of horses in supporting farming operations and a rural lifestyle with hunting, is also unfortunate.

CONCLUSION

Building Conservation consider that the proposal will result in the complete loss of a non-designated heritage asset whose significance is described in the above report and hence paragraph 197 of the 2019 NPPF will have to be taken into consideration when deciding upon the merits of this scheme. Building Conservation would urge the reuse and internal modernisation of the cottage and the traditional outbuildings, with some alterations and extensions, rather than their complete loss.

Val Robson

Building Conservation Officer