North Hertfordshire District Council
Building Conservation comments

File Ref: 18/00300/LBC
Date: 02/03/2018
Planning Officer: JMC
Address: Danyells, classified road from Rushden Road to Sandon Road, Sandon
Subject: Single storey rear conservatory extension following removal of existing timber framed window.

Danyells is grade II* listed and is located within the Sandon Conservation Area. Both the building and the area are, therefore, Designated Heritage Assets for the purpose of applying the aims of Section 12 of the NPPF. The building was added to the Statutory List on 27/05/1968 and is described as follows:

Large house. c.1700 rebuilding of an earlier house extended and altered in C19. Timber frame, rendered and roughcast. Exposed brick base. Steeply pitched half hipped tiled roof. Double depth. 4 window front. 2 storeys and attics. Central entrance: 6 fielded panelled door in reveal with fluted pilaster jambs, later bracketed hood. Flush frame glazing bar sashes, smaller on first floor. Combed pargetting. Coved eaves. Central 3 light hipped dormer. 2 stacks in central valley, that to right rebuilt in C19, that to left recapped and multiform. Right end: cellar openings, 2 ground floor sashes, 1 on first floor, 2 small 2 light attic casements. Left end: a ground floor sash, 4 small first floor sashes, 2 small 2 light attic casements. ***Attached to left 2 low gabled outshuts, that to rear a dairy with a stack and an entrance, lean-to to left. To rear: steps up to central entrance with bracketed dentilled hood, scattered sashes, that to ground floor right is tripartite, 3 light stair window to centre.*** *Interior: some exposed framing with cross bracing, large scantling suggests C15 or earlier origins, ground floor reset C17, ovolo-moulded panelling, stop chamfered binding beams, Open well stair with original moulded handrail, closed string and square newel posts. First floor: reset C16 clunch fireplace, 4 centred ovolo moulded arch and jambs, outer square head, foliate spandrels with shields. Clasped purlin roof. Moated site. (RCHM Typescript).*
(my emphasis in bold)



It is interesting to note that at 5.2 of the submitted Listed Building Consent Justification Statement, it reads as follows:

"As a specific element of the house, the rear elevation is undoubtedly an aesthetically pleasing architectural composition …"

Due to the building's grade II* listed status, Historic England have been consulted on this application and I note that a non-intervention response has been returned.

It is acknowledged that paragraph 129 of the NPPF states *that "Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal .....taking account of the available evidence and necessary expertise...."*

Having been to site previously, there is some uncertainty in my mind as to the extent of c.1700 rebuilding referred to in the list entry and apart from the side additions, front dormer and certain windows, to what extent the house was extended and altered in the C19. Having said that, it would appear to be the case that, with the exception of the recent extension, the building's footprint appears to be very similar (if not practically identical) to the same building represented on the 1877 OS six-inch map. A similar footprint is shown on the 1898 and 1923 OS maps. This would imply that the building has not changed a great deal in over 140 years. However, to the south-east of the main house were a substantial number of what appeared to be outbuildings, most of which have since been removed.

At paragraph 132 of the NPPF it states 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. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. As heritage assets are irreplaceable, any harm or loss should require clear and convincing justification...."*

Under appn refs: 01/00146/1HH & 01/00147/1LB, a single-storey rear extension was granted to replace an existing conservatory. The Conservation Officer stated at the following at the time:

".... The proposed extension will appear as a continual development of the small side additions, which collectively, will remain clearly ancillary to the main house. The proposed form complements the proportions of the existing side range and the hipped roof respects the orientation of the roof slope of the main house. I therefore consider the positioning and form of the proposed extension to be acceptable in principle.

Although it is recognised that the extension is designed as a garden room the amount of continuous openings weakens the form of the addition. The windows to the main house are large, but there is clearly more wall in comparison to openings. I feel that it is essential that the amount of window openings is reduced to provide a stronger solid form to the extension, so that the window arrangement does not compromise that of the main house.....".

On 14th September 2017, I commented on a proposal at this property under ref: 17/02036/1PRE for a 'Single storey rear extension following demolition of existing extension'. At the time, I stated that I firmly believe that the 2001 scheme was a measured and well-articulated response to extending the building that respected its intended ancillary role to the principal building and did not compete with the dairy. The pre-app proposal suggested either a pair of 'small pavilions with hipped roofs and glazing between stout oak posts on allow plinth' or a single addition under a single hipped roof. In either case, this would have result in:

a.) the loss of the tripartite sash;
b.) the loss of the 2001 extension and
c.) would result in a built form extending across and partially in front of the host building's rear elevation.

With regard to the current proposal, there are, I suggest, three heritage matters to consider:

i) impact upon the fabric of the listed building;
ii) impact of the form, fenestration and siting of the conservatory; and
iii) impact of the conservatory upon the character and appearance of the conservation area.

The Heritage Statement (dated 3 August 2017) prepared by John Selby to accompany the pre-app last year has not been submitted in support of the current proposal. Having said that, I reiterate that I concur with Mr Selby's view that the tripartite window that would be affected by this proposal *"…is a relative modern replacement of a nineteenth century window, which had probably been inserted at that time to improve the level of light into the kitchen…".* However, I reiterate that this window still makes a positive contribution to the building's external appearance and has been further copied in the rear elevation of the 2001 extension.

In my opinion, the 2001 extension makes a positive contribution and should neither be removed nor extended. I have previously stated that if the 2001 extension is proposed to be removed, then its removal altogether and reinstating the form of the dairy would be a positive outcome but this is not proposed here. Although I am keen to discourage any building in front of the rear elevation of the two-storey section, if the 2001 extension were removed and an extension/conservatory were proposed off the kitchen i.e. utilising the tri-partite sash opening, then I could perhaps see a case for supporting a modest addition to the house.

The Proposal.
With regard to 2.1 of the Listed Building Consent Justification Statement, I question as to what is a "Traditional conservatory style"? By reason of its form, high plinth and finials, I am not convinced that the proposal could be said to be 'traditional'.

With regard to 2.2, it should be note that whilst I was unwilling to support an extension that would protrude beyond the end of the adjacent existing single-storey projection, the reasons I have given previously for raising an objection was not limited to length of projection alone. With regard to the same paragraph, I did not raise an objection to the removal of the section of wall below the tripartite sash in that I have stated that the sash should not be removed unless this was part of a proposal that would result in a.) the removal of the 2001 addition and b.) a single rear projection only at the rear.

Although eloquently expressed I do not concur with 4.1 of the Justification Statement, that the conservatory is a *"valid response to the essential form and architectural style of the host house and would exhibit subordination and intrinsic proportionality in relation to it"* or that it would *"display inherent architectural harmony".*

Whilst not forming part of this application, the Heritage Statement (dated 3 August 2017) prepared by John Selby mentions that *"The form of Danyells Farmhouse seems to have remained unchanged since its early eighteenth century alterations, which include the addition of the dairy building on the south-east side"* (para 3.5). Further on, the Heritage Statement states that *"Danyells has evidential, historical, architectural and communal values. It is a grade II* listed building and is of more than special architectural or historic interest. It is of high significance".*

In my opinion, the conservatory is a formal response to a vernacular farmhouse of high significance and which has remained relatively unchanged over the last 140 years. A previous conservatory was replaced by the 2001 addition.

The application acknowledges that *"the rear elevation is undoubtedly an aesthetically pleasing architectural composition"* (5.2 of Justification Statement) and there have been occasions in the past where I have taken the view that a listed building can no longer be adapted/extended. I am not necessarily suggesting that this is the case here, but I have an in-principle concern regarding 2no. single-storey rear projections co-existing side-by-side, particularly considering the different architectural language of both elements.

Recommendation
Danyells is grade II* listed and is located within the Sandon Conservation Area. Although 'Georgianised' (window details), Danyells remains a relatively unchanged vernacular building possessing high significance and the rear elevation including the existing 2001 extension, makes a positive contribution to the building's special character.

By reason of the conservatory's form, plinth height, amount of glazing and roof finials, this would be a formal response to an otherwise informal host building and the conservatory's appearance and position would also compete with the 2001 addition. This juxtaposition of built form and their close proximity would result in both rear projections (when seen together) harming the building's special character and the appearance of the Sandon Conservation Area.

I, therefore, raise an **OBJECTION** on the basis that the proposal will fail to satisfy Sections 16 and 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and as supported by the aims of Section 12 of the NPPF and Policy HE1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011 - 2031 (Proposed Submission, October 2016). The degree of harm would be less than substantial but there are no discernible public benefits to outweigh this harm that would satisfy paragraph 134 of the NPPF.

Mark Simmons
Senior Conservation Officer