

REPORT TO MINISTER FOR PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT

By Graham Self MA MSc FRTPI

Appeal by Mr and Mrs S Wilson (but see "Procedural Matters" below) against a decision to include a building on the list of Sites of Special Interest.

Reference Number: HE0342

Site at: 12 La Motte Street, St Helier.

Introduction

1. This appeal is being decided by the written representations procedure. I inspected the site and surroundings on 4 April 2016.
2. The appeal is against the decision to include the building at 12 La Motte Street, St Helier on the list of Sites of Special Interest (Grade 4) under Article 51 of the Planning and Building (Jersey) Law 2002.
3. This report provides a brief description of the appeal site and surroundings, summarises the gist of the cases for the appellants and the planning authority, and then sets out my assessment and recommendation. The appeal statements, plans and other relevant documents including photographs are in the case file for you to examine if necessary.

Site and Surroundings

4. The appeal property is a four-storey building forming part of a terrace on the south side of La Motte Street, the top storey being a mansard-shaped structure with two projecting dormers. The building appears to have mid-nineteenth century origins but has been altered in various ways with more recent additions or alterations, including the mansard roof. The main frontage has a painted stucco finish; the mansard is covered in slate or slate-effect tiles.
5. The ground floor shop front is of traditional style. To the right of the shop front there is a timber four-panelled door (which appears to provide access to the upper floors) with a single-paned window above. The windows on the first and second floors are timber hornless sashes with 12 panes. The windows in the mansard floor have modern pvc frames with hinged opening vents.

Procedural Matters

6. The appeal appears to have been accepted and processed without querying its validity. However, there is no provision under Article 108 for a single appeal to be made jointly by two persons.¹ As far as I can tell, only one appeal has been lodged. I therefore propose to treat this appeal as if it had been made by Mrs Wilson,² and I refer to "the appellant" in the singular below.

¹ Article 108(1) refers to an appeal by "a person" (singular) aggrieved by a decision.

² I have selected Mrs Wilson, instead of Mr Wilson, by the toss of a coin.

Background History

7. The appeal building was evidently first identified as having some heritage value in 2002 and after a review and re-survey in 2011 its heritage value was considered by Jersey Heritage and the Ministerial Listing Advisory Group. In September 2013 Jersey Heritage prepared a schedule proposing to list the building as Grade 3. A notice of intent was served in April 2015. A representation was made opposing the proposed listing and the listing was revised to Grade 4. The owner maintained an objection, so the matter was referred to the Chief Executive Officer, who decided to list the building in October 2015: this is the decision now appealed against.

Case for Appellant

8. The appellant does not believe that the building has any architectural, heritage or historical interest which merits the Grade 4 listing. The building has a modern shop-front and a nondescript modern mansard roof with UPVC dormers. The alterations mean that the building does not retain its 19th century form. The streetscape is uninteresting, disjointed and not significant enough to merit a Grade 4 listing on the external envelope of the appeal building.

Case for Planning Authority

9. The building is a surviving example of an early to mid 19th century town commercial premises with accommodation above, representative of the social and economic growth of St Helier during that period. Despite more modern features having been introduced, the building retains its original external form, scale and proportions. It contributes to the historic character of the area. The internal interest has largely been lost, but the building is considered to be of public importance sufficient to warrant its retention on the list of Sites of Special Interest.

Assessment and Conclusions

10. The dispute in this case concerns only the frontage of the appeal property. There is general agreement that internally, it has no significant heritage value. Criteria for deciding whether or not buildings merit listing have evidently been adopted and published (by the then Minister for Planning and Environment). These include: the age of the building; the history of the site; the type of building and whether it is unusual or common; and the degree to which a building is representative of its type, age, style or quality.
11. I agree with some of the appellant's comments about the building and about the street generally - the building does not have a particularly distinguished appearance and the same applies to the wider street scene. As can be seen on the photographs submitted in evidence, there are shop fronts of various forms, with fascias, stallrisers and pilasters of different sizes, shapes and colours, and a variety of projecting and hanging signs. On the upper floors, window shapes vary, and there are examples of traditional timber sashes and modern pvc frames. The original design of the appeal building itself has also been affected by changes made over the years, most notably the addition of the mansard roof.
12. However, the historic character of the building has not been completely lost. Applying the criteria mentioned above, it is also relevant to consider points other than the appearance of the building and its surroundings. Despite the mansard addition and other alterations, the building retains much of its nineteenth century form. The assessment by Jersey Heritage states that "although there are other buildings in the town from this period, No 12 is part of a finite collection of the town's earlier architectural heritage [which] requires a careful consideration of

their guardianship". The planning authority describe the building as a "surviving example" of commercial premises with accommodation above, representative of historic mercantile activity in the old town. This evidence lacks facts - the term "finite" could be applied to any number, large or small - and there is scant information from either side in this case about the number of existing buildings which have a similar history; but from what I have read it appears that the number of such buildings which now remain is limited.

13. The group value of the building has also been affected by the changes which have been made to the properties in this part of La Motte Street. Nevertheless enough remains of the general form of the building, for example the three-windowed design and the proportion of window to wall on the first and second floors, to warrant giving weight to conservation aims.
14. Bearing in mind the agreed lack of heritage value as regards the building's interior, I consider that the appellant had good reason to oppose the grade 3 listing which was evidently considered appropriate at one time. However, I conclude on balance that the planning authority has a sound case for grade 4 listing.

Recommendation

15. I recommend that the appeal be dismissed and that the decision to list the building at No 12 La Motte Street as a site of special interest (Listed Building Grade 4) be confirmed.

G F Self

Inspector

15 April 2016.