

Description of Site, Proposal and Constraints

The application relates to 9 Northload Street, Glastonbury BA6 9JJ

The property is a Grade II listed building and lies within the Northload Street Character Area of the Glastonbury Conservation Area.

The application has been submitted retrospectively and seeks listed building consent for the painting of a mural on the gable end wall.

Summary of parish comments, any objections or conflict with the recommendation

Ward Member/ Councillor

No comment received

Parish Council

Glastonbury Town Council – Recommends approval:

- The committee is of the opinion that this enhances the Conservation Area and also protects the wall from the graffiti that it previously suffered. The building was listed in its plain painted state and is now protected from further graffiti by the addition of the mural. The committee regrets that the applicant did not follow the correct LBC planning procedure.

Mendip Conservation Advisory Panel

Recommends refusal:

- Opinions were voiced on whether this mural was appropriate in this setting on a listed building in a conservation area
The Panel does not object in principal to murals but the subject matter and the listed building position are inappropriate.
The panel recommends refusal (Draft minutes).
- One panel member added: The Panel does not object in principal to murals but the subject matter did not relate to the listed building position are inappropriate.
The mural makes a negative contribution to the listed building and detracted from the character of the Conservation Area.

Others

4 representations in support of the application have been received, including a petition with 311 signatures, making the following points (in summary):

- [The mural] is a piece of staggering artwork that enlivens this part of the town.
What could be more in-keeping with town or its famous historic past than the Tor,

the Abbey and a depiction of the Sword Excalibur coming from the Lake? This piece is beautiful and to get rid of it would be a terrible thing to do.

- Although it might not be to everyone's artistic taste, it is a vast improvement on a plain green wall with periodic graffiti all over it. I believe it is in-keeping with the character of the town and the tourists seem to love it.
- I think the mural... depicting aspects of Glastonbury and its history is fantastic...it should definitely be preserved.
- The wall was previously painted render and a prime target for less talented graffiti artists. We are representative of local people of Glaston as well as Avalonian persuasion and those who run businesses in the town and we feel the mural suits our town which is very different from any other in the area. The mural faces away from the listed buildings [*factually incorrect – JB edit*] and provides a welcoming celebration of the features of the town.

1 Neutral representation has been received making the following points (in summary):

- Although I do not personally like the mural in question, I do support there being a mural of some sort on that wall. I also feel that maybe the size of the mural is too much but I would not want to see planning permission for any mural on this wall be refused. That would set a precedent that would be bad for the town as a whole.

2 representations in objection have been received making the following points (in summary):

- The whole thing should be removed it's not in keeping with the area and although they say it is Glastonbury it tells nothing of the history of the town it makes the area look like the back streets of Bristol with its graffiti disgraceful so please see sense and take it down.
- I strongly oppose this application due to being disturbed by tourists leaning on my bedroom window to take a photo of it and chattering. It has also become a hangout for youngsters and later night drinkers after the pubs have closed, causing disturbance and leaving rubbish and bottles.

Relevant planning history

A10013/001– Erection of wall mounted information panel – approved with conditions 30/06/99

Summary of all planning policies relevant to the proposal

DP3 (Heritage Conservation) of the Mendip District Local Plan 2006-2029 (Part 1 Strategies and Policies - adopted 15th December 2014)

National Planning Policy Framework

Planning Practice Guidance

Assessment of relevant issues

Principle

The property is a Grade II listed building dating from the mid 19th century with some earlier fabric to the rear. It sits on a prominent corner site in the heart of the Glastonbury Conservation Area. It is a good example of a 19th-century townhouse with an attractive original shop window with fascia supported by paired curved brackets and pilasters to Northload Street, with a row of cottages (Marchants Buildings) attached to the rear down Feversham Lane. The building forms part of a recognised group with Nos. 5 and 7 Northload Street and Marchants Buildings, and makes a positive contribution to the historic street scene as well as being a designated heritage asset of national interest in its own right.

The proposal is for the painting of a mural on the gable end wall of the listed building and the application has been submitted retrospectively.

Effect on Listed Building

The gable end elevation to Feversham Lane was previously painted in a single colour (dark green) and, although it would be preferable for this elevation to have remained unpainted, this painting did not substantially detract from the character of this listed building. [It is not in the scope of this report to determine whether this extant situation was lawful.]

The mural as proposed (and as now existing) is a scene depicting a variety of images, some mythological, of the history of Glastonbury. It is brightly coloured and in a style typical of graffiti with the word "Glastonbury" across the bottom in lettering of a matching style.

This mural does not relate to this listed building and due to its scale, colours and style becomes the most prominent feature of this property, detracting from its special interest as a building of historic and architectural significance.

Effect on the setting of other nearby listed buildings

The setting of a heritage asset is defined as the surroundings in which the heritage asset is experienced. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Directly opposite the mural is the Who'd a Thought It public house – grade II listed; adjoining the mural site are Marchants Buildings, and attached to the other side of the application property are nos. 5 & 7 Northload Street, all also grade II.

The proposed mural will be a prominent feature in close proximity to the above listed buildings, making difficult the appreciation their special interest.

Effect on the character and appearance of the Glastonbury Conservation Area

A conservation area is defined as being an area of architectural or historic importance, the character or appearance of which it is desired to preserve or enhance.

The proposed mural is a prominent feature in this part of the conservation area, clearly visible on the approach down Northload Street from the North and also from the public carpark on Feversham Lane. The mural, due to its prominence described above, would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Glastonbury Conservation Area.

Conclusion

There are three issues to consider: whether the proposal would cause harm to the special interest of the listed building; whether it would harm the setting of the listed buildings opposite or adjacent; and whether it preserves or enhances the character or appearance of the Glastonbury Conservation Area. In each case, if harm would be caused, whether there are public benefits which would outweigh the harm.

As set out above, the special interest of the host listed building would be adversely affected, causing harm to this designated heritage asset. The setting of the opposite and adjacent listed buildings would also be harmed. It is also clear that the proposed works would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Glastonbury Conservation Area and so would therefore cause harm to the significance of this designated heritage asset.

It is recommended that the application for listed building consent be refused as the works would cause 'less than substantial harm' to the significance of the designated heritage asset, the effect of the setting of nearby designated heritage assets, and the character and appearance of the Glastonbury Conservation Area.

'Less than substantial harm' is not the same as acceptable harm and in accordance with Para 134 of the NPPF, the level of harm should be weighed against any associated public benefits of the proposal.

There is no public benefit associated with the painting of a mural on this listed building. The application argues that the benefit would be that the mural would act as a deterrent to graffiti artists; however, a proposal which causes harm to heritage assets should not be approved in order to prevent a potential criminal act of graffiti.

Consequently, having special regard to the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and taking into account existing case law, the works applied for would not bring about the public benefits required to outweigh the harm caused to the heritage asset and therefore should be refused.