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## Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 22/11/17

gan Mr A Thickett BA(Hons) BTP  
MRTPI Dip RSA

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 07.12.17

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22/11/17

by Mr A Thickett BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI  
Dip RSA

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 07.12.17

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**Appeal Ref: APP/E6840/E/17/3182706**

**Site address: Wyndcliffe Court, Penterry Lane, St Arvans, Monmouthshire, NP16 6EY**

**The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.**

- 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 & Mrs Anthony Clay against the decision of Monmouthshire County Council.
  - The application Ref DC/2016/00914, dated 2 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 March 2017.
  - The works proposed are replacement roof covering.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed roof covering would preserve the special character and interest of this Grade II\* listed building.

### Reasons

3. Wyndcliffe Court was built in 1922 in the Arts and Crafts Jacobean style. The house sits in substantial grounds with commanding views over the Severn Estuary. The house, Garage Cottages, walls, gateways and garden features (including the pool and pergola) form a cohesive and important group. The house and Garage Cottages are listed Grade II\* with the remaining structures individually listed Grade II.
  4. There is no dispute that the original Collyweston Cotswold stone slates have reached the end of their useful life and need to be replaced. The appellant's 'Heritage Justification and Structural Assessment Statement' explains why, due to the nature of the existing material and local weather conditions, it would not be advisable to replace like for like. This is not disputed by the Council. The Council, Cadw and others have suggested alternatives to the roof covering suggested by the appellants. It would not be appropriate for me to comment on the alternatives as doing so may fetter the decision of any body or person that may follow me. The matter I have to address is whether the proposed Cardinal reproduction Cotswold stone slates are suitable.
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5. The appellants' 'Heritage Justification and Structural Assessment Statement' sets out the history of the house, describes it and its setting and includes a detailed investigation of the roof. The roof is steeply pitched with a mix of dormers, gable and hips. The ridge tiles are Collyweston stone, hips are formed using angle cut stone slates and most of the valleys are of the swept laced type which provide a fully slated surface with courses running from one slope to the other in a continuous sweep. Slates oversail verges and eaves and I agree with the appellant that *'the use of stone for walls and roofs creates a harmonious elegant appearance'*.
6. The submissions supporting the appeal leave me in no doubt that the appellants carried out extensive research before opting for the proposed material. The appellants contend that; *'Cardinal Slate was chosen...because the proposed slates are very similar in texture have similar natural riven looking finish, similar weight, available in a wide range of shapes and sizes, and are able to be worked into the swept valley gutters'*. A sample of the Cardinal Slate was provided at my site visit and I accept that it is a very close match to the Collyweston stone in terms of appearance and texture. However, I have two concerns which prevent me from concluding that the use of Cardinal slates would preserve the special interest and character of this building.
7. The Council provides a brief but useful summary of the Arts and Craft movement; *'The Arts and Crafts movement emerged in the late 19th Century and early twentieth Century, based on a return to craftsmanship and a move away from the mass production and industrialisation of the time. It aimed to push the individual skills based on natural materials and traditional methods of construction, function and simplicity pioneered by William Morris'*. The use of a man made rather than a natural material created through an industrial process does not, in my view, honour the spirit of the Arts and Craft movement. I agree with Cadw's view that the proposed material; *'would mark a radical change to the historic form and layout of the building designed externally as an Arts and Crafts Jacobean style country house. I (Cadw) do not therefore consider that the proposal would 'preserve or enhance' the building's special architectural character'*.
8. The appellants contend that once the Cardinal slates have weathered for a few years they *'will be virtually indistinguishable from the current roofing material'*. The appellants also argue that the *'weathering and structural stability of the constituent materials of the Cardinal slate are well known'*. A photograph is produced of a building roofed in the proposed material and natural stone slates. No indication is given of the length of time the artificial slates have been in place but the rooves are clearly different<sup>1</sup>. One would hope that any replacement roof covering would be in place for as long, if not longer, than the Collywestons (almost 100 years). The Cardinal slates have only been in use since the mid 1990s and there is insufficient evidence before me to show that the proposed material would weather in such a way so as to maintain the harmonious elegant appearance of the building described above.

## Conclusions

9. I do not doubt the appellant's assertion that the proposed material has been used elsewhere on listed buildings but I am unaware of the circumstances and must make my decision on the specifics of this case. I also note the support from the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales and others. Wyndcliffe Court was listed at Grade II\* because it is *'a good and unaltered Jacobean style*

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<sup>1</sup> Figure 9 Grounds of Appeal

*house*'. I acknowledge that a new roof is needed and alteration is, therefore, inevitable. However, to do so using the proposed artificial material would significantly undermine the ethos of the Arts and Crafts movement, of which this house is a fine example. Further, I am not satisfied that the Cardinal slate would weather in a way that would preserve the complementary relationship between the walls and roof covering so important to the special character of this building.

10. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I find that the proposed roof covering would not preserve the special character and interest of this Grade II\* listed building and conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.
11. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objective of enhancing the culture and heritage of Wales.

*Anthony Thickett*

Inspector