



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2017

by Sarah Housden BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 19 December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B3030/D/17/3182692

Bunny Hill Barn, Old Rufford Road, Farnsfield NG22 8HU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Steven Lee against the decision of Newark & Sherwood District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00562/FUL, dated 17 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is 'two storey extension and single storey lean-to'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey extension and single storey lean-to at Bunny Hill Barn, Old Rufford Road, Farnsfield NG22 8HU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 17/00562/FUL, dated 17 March 2017, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as follows: 041/P2/004 Existing and Proposed site layout, 041/P2/002 Proposed Elevations and 041/P2/003 Proposed Floor Plans.
 - 3) Notwithstanding condition 2, no development shall take place until details of the joinery for the doors and windows in the extensions hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) No demolition or development shall take place until details of a procedure for recording the staircase and first floor loft door opening as shown on elevation A on drawing number 041/P2/001 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The recording shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset, having particular regard to the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host property.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located approximately 1.7 km to the west of Farnsfield and approximately 150 metres to the south of the commercial and residential properties at the A614 Old Rufford Road/Mansfield Road White Post roundabout. Bunny Hill Barn lies to the south of the group of converted agricultural buildings formerly associated with Hill House Farm with which it shares a long single track access drive off Mansfield Road.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) (paragraph 135) indicates that the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining a planning application. Policies CP9 and CP14 of the Newark and Sherwood Core Strategy (2011) (CS) and Policies DM5 and DM9 of the Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document (2013) (DMP) are consistent with the Framework in seeking to protect and sustain the significance of heritage assets through appropriate siting, design, detailing, materials and methods of construction. The 'Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings' Supplementary Planning Document (2014) (SPD) indicates that extensions and alterations to a traditional rural building should not remove essential features, compromise its architectural integrity, building form or have a substantial impact on the wider landscape setting.
5. Whilst not on a local list of non-designated heritage assets, the significance of Bunny Hill Barn was assessed as part of the planning application process. Based on my site visit, I concur with the Council's view that its significance derives from its robust appearance and character and traditional detailing which provide a connection to its former agricultural use. The retention of historic features such as window and door openings and the use of high quality new materials have helped to maintain the historic connection with the building's former use. In addition, it makes a contribution to the group setting of the buildings within the countryside to the west of the village.
6. Views of the appeal property are restricted due to its enclosure with boundary fences, the position of adjoining buildings, vegetation and the general topography of the area. When viewed from the Public Right of Way to the north and Old Rufford Road, the property is seen as part of the farm grouping which served Hill House Farm.
7. The gabled form and varied ridge heights of the proposed two storey and single storey extensions along the southern boundary would reflect the varied height and form of the host property and the adjoining unit at Farm View Barn. The extension would form a 'U' shaped yard, an arrangement which the SPD identifies as a recognisable farm building layout within the District. Whilst the Conservation Officer considers that a single storey extension would be more appropriate, the two storey projection would be limited in length and would be subordinate in scale to the original barn which would remain the dominant building form.
8. The glazed section whilst contemporary in appearance would have a vertical emphasis and a condition requiring details of the joinery would be necessary and reasonable to ensure that it is sympathetic to the host building. This aspect would accord with the guidance in the SPD which indicates that extensions of modern design may be acceptable provided that they are carefully designed and do not harm the existing character of the building. I

- conclude that the overall scale and form of this part of the scheme would not be harmful to the character or appearance of the property or to its significance as a non-designated heritage asset. It would not be unduly prominent or conspicuous and would not be harmful to the barn's contribution to the landscape setting of the group or to its relationship with Hill House.
9. Turning to the east elevation, the brickwork supporting the external staircase feature appears to have been largely re-built. There is nothing in the evidence to indicate whether the window below the stairs is within an original opening or not. Although the stone treads appear to be original, the historic character of the structure has been changed by the areas of new brickwork and the addition of railings. Notwithstanding this, the form of the staircase together with the loft door opening at first floor contribute to the understanding of and connection with the building's former use and therefore to its significance.
 10. The proposed lean-to would necessitate removal of the staircase in addition to the removal of the first floor loft door and a reduction in the length of the opening to accommodate a three pane window. This domestic style window would be out of character with the two pane windows in the rest of the property. Taken together, the removal of the staircase and the alteration to the first floor opening would result in the loss of historic fabric which would be harmful to the significance of the building. The proposed lean-to extension and new door opening would have a modern appearance which would be unsympathetic to the barn's existing character.
 11. In my view the harm to the non-designated heritage asset identified above is less than substantial. The Framework makes clear in paragraph 135 that less than substantial harm to the significance of a non-designated heritage asset requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and its significance. The re-arrangement of the internal layout of the accommodation is essentially a private benefit and I attach little weight to this consideration in the overall planning balance.
 12. However, the appellant has submitted evidence of a significant damp problem within part of the living accommodation formed within the staircase area. Whilst I note the Conservation Officer's view that the use of cement pointing and tanking may have restricted air circulation within the building, there also appears to be water ingress. At my site visit it appeared likely that the flat roof which has been coated to try and prevent water ingress and the lack of features to remove and dispose of rainwater has contributed to the problem.
 13. The damp problem is of concern in relation to the long term integrity of the structure and the practicalities of the residential use of the building. Having regard to the location of the building within the wider group and the extent of existing alterations to the staircase, I conclude that the loss of the staircase and loft door opening would cause limited harm to the significance of the appeal property as a non-designated heritage asset. That is a material consideration to which I attach significant weight in the overall planning balance.
 14. In conclusion, the proposed extensions along the southern boundary would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the barn or to its significance as a non-designated heritage asset. Whilst the proposed lean-to extension would not fully accord with CS Policies CP9 and CP14 and DMP Policies DM5 and DM9 and the advice in the SPD that alterations to rural buildings should not remove

essential features, the material considerations in this case are of sufficient weight to outweigh the limited conflict with the development plan. The proposal would be in accordance with the provisions of the Framework in relation to non-designated heritage assets, when read as a whole. However, I have come to this decision based on circumstances of this particular site and the evidence before me.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard time limit condition, a condition requiring that the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. A condition requiring details of the proposed joinery to be agreed is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the host barn. The officer report indicates that the recording of the staircase structure would be an appropriate response to its removal if justified. Having regard to paragraph 141 of the Framework, I consider that a condition requiring the recording of both the staircase and loft door is necessary and reasonable in the interests of recording heritage assets. As the loss of historic fabric would be relatively minor, it would be appropriate for the details to be agreed between the planning authority and the appellant.
16. For the reasons outlined above and having had regard to all of the other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Sarah Housden

INSPECTOR