

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2017

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T4210/W/16/3164780

Greenhalgh Fold Cottage, Whipney Lane, Tottington, BL8 4HT

- 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 Ms Sarah Bourne against the decision of Bury Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 60468, dated 10 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a change of use from a barn to a supplementary family annex.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Ms Sarah Bourne against Bury Metropolitan Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on, firstly, the setting of the Grade II listed Greenhalgh Fold Cottage and, secondly the character and appearance of the host building.

Reasons

Setting of the listed building

4. The appeal building is located in close proximity to the Grade II listed Greenhalgh Fold Cottage. This is an attractive 2 storey cottage constructed in coursed rubble, with stone mullion windows. The triangular panel over the front door dates the building to 1744. Both the listed cottage and the appeal building are set back from the golf course, the car park and club house of which are located to the west.
 5. The appeal building and the listed cottage have a close visual connection, and run along the same east/west plane. They are located around 10 metres apart and at one time were physically linked. Whilst the appeal building was most recently used for storage, it has an agricultural appearance that compliments the listed cottage. It has a relatively simple brick exterior that is recessive and subservient to the cottage. The introduction of timber cladding would
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significantly alter the character of the building, and would create a far more striking appearance. This would poorly relate to the listed cottage and would harmfully alter the relationship between the properties. The sense of historic connection between the buildings would also be undermined by the introduction of a dominant modern exterior.

6. Regardless of whether the appeal building is listed by curtilage or not, its proximity to the listed cottage means that there is a clear visual relationship between the two structures. Accordingly, I must consider the effect of the appeal scheme on the setting of the designated heritage asset as part of the surroundings in which it is experienced.
7. Whilst the recently constructed greenkeepers building is also clad in timber, this building has an entirely different relationship to the listed building. It is both further away and lower in height, and it reads as part of the group of modern golf course buildings to the west. The timber garden fencing to the east of the listed cottage is also subservient in scale and some distance away, and does not provide a justification for the development.
8. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal proposal would harm the setting of the Grade II listed Greenhalgh Fold Cottage. This harm would be 'less than substantial' in the context of paragraphs 133 and 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). However, whilst securing the re-use of the appeal building is desirable, this should not be at the expense of harming the setting of the listed building. Whilst the appellant states that other design solutions are unviable, there is no evidence before me to substantiate this, or to suggest that other solutions have been explored in detail. In these circumstances, I am not satisfied that the benefits of the development outweigh the harm to the setting of the listed building in this case.
9. I therefore conclude that the development would be contrary to Policy ENV2/3 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997), and guidance in the Framework relating to designated heritage assets.
10. Policy ENV2/3 was adopted in 1997, prior to the publication of the Framework. However, it should not be regarded as out of date simply because of its age. Insofar as it relates to this appeal, it is broadly consistent with the Framework and I therefore attach significant weight to it.

Character and appearance of the building

11. The appeal building was likely constructed as an agricultural building, originally forming part of Greenhalgh Fold Farm. It is an attractive historic structure with a sliding timber door. It sits on a stone plinth but is otherwise mostly constructed of historic brickwork, albeit with areas of later infill and repair work. Whilst the later brickwork has led to a patchwork appearance in places this does not significantly detract from the building's overall character. The interior of the building also contains some historic features including attractive timber roof beams. The history of the building is linked to the adjacent cottage, and the 2 buildings stand close together within a largely open landscape. In this regard, I do not consider that the current appearance of the building detracts from either the setting of the cottage, or the wider Green Belt.

12. There is a dispute over whether the appeal building should be treated as a non-designated heritage asset. Whilst the building may not be on an adopted local list, the Council has provided evidence to support their view including a statement of significance accompanied by historic mapping. Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) advises that local planning authorities may identify non-designated heritage assets (Ref ID 18a-039-20140306). Whilst the appeal site may not be 'locally listed', this is not a requirement of PPG, and it does not preclude the relevance of the Council's assessment. On this basis, I accept that the appeal building does have a degree of significance which merits consideration in the determination of the appeal.
13. The proposal would introduce timber cladding to most of the exterior of the building above the stone plinth. This would significantly change the appearance of the building, and would remove much of its historic character and identity. Whilst the physical structure would be largely retained beneath the timber cladding, and could theoretically be removed at a later date, I note that the proposal is not for a temporary permission. The modern timber clad buildings to the west are of a separate character, and they do not lend support to the proposal in my view.
14. The appellant states that use of external insulation would preserve interesting internal features, including ventilation holes. However, this would be at the expense of the harm to the exterior of the building, including to the setting of the listed building. In terms of the potential for any brickwork repairs to compromise the structural integrity of the building, I note that the Engineering Report concludes that there are no areas of significant reconstruction required for a satisfactory conversion. There is also no evidence before me that additional weatherproofing could not be secured by other means.
15. The development also proposes a new balcony and spiral staircase to the rear of the building. This would be partially screened from view by a new stone flank wall, and would not be visible in the context of the listed building other than in longer views to the rear. It would also be partly screened by mature trees. Whilst the balcony and staircase would be a domestic feature, the lightweight appearance and restricted visibility would preserve the character of the building in my view.
16. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the host building. It would therefore be contrary to Policy OL1/4 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan (1997), guidance contained in the Conversion and Re-use of Buildings in the Green Belt Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) (2007), and guidance in the Framework relating to non-designated heritage assets.
17. Policy OL1/4 and the SPG were adopted prior to the publication of the Framework. However, they should not be regarded as out of date simply because of their age. Insofar as they relate to the appeal proposal, both 17. Policy OL1/4 and SPG are broadly consistent with the Framework, and I attach significant weight to them.

Other Matter

18. Whilst the appeal building is located in the Green Belt, it is not in dispute that it is "*of permanent and substantial construction*" for the purposes of paragraph

90 of the Framework. Its re-use would therefore not be inappropriate in terms of Green Belt policy.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR