



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 July 2019
by Conor Rafferty LLB (Hons), AIEMA, Solicitor (Non-practising)

Decision by A U Ghafoor BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/D/19/3226640

5 Parkfields Farm, Rowan Barn, Tittensor Road, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9HQ

- 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 Felicity Norton against the decision of Stafford Borough Council
 - The application Ref 18/29523/HOU dated 15 October 2018 was refused by notice dated 23 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as follows: *retrospective planning application for new door*.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the installation of a door at 5 Parkfields Farm, Rowan Barn, Tittensor Road, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9HQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 18/29523/HOU, dated 15 October 2018, and the plan numbered M1426 01 dated 29 August 2018 and titled Proposed Front Elevation Entrance Door.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. The development for which planning permission is sought has been carried out. Retrospective planning application is sought for new door. However, to accurately reflect the meaning of development, I have deleted the word "retrospective" in the decision above.

Main Issues

4. The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal property is a former agricultural building that has been converted into a residential dwelling, which the Council considers to be a non-designated heritage asset. The proposal relates to a grey painted aluminium door with horizontal panelling and a full height side window to the right. This has replaced a former timber door with vertical panelling.

6. The property forms part of a quiet complex of similar converted buildings at Parkfields Farm. The immediate area is defined by the rural, farmstead setting, with properties which vary in appearance but retain a consistency in terms of character. Although all buildings within the complex are now used as dwellings, development has been sympathetic, and the previous use of the properties and nature of the area is apparent.
7. The existing doors and windows within Parkfields Farm appear to generally reflect the positioning and shape of openings that are typical in agricultural buildings, contributing to the character and respecting the previous use and rural nature of the area. However, these windows and doors vary in style, colour and material between dwellings. Furthermore, various modern additions have been made to some of the buildings, including roof windows and solar panels.
8. There is limited visibility of the appeal property from the public realm. Due to its positioning in a more enclosed section of Parkfields Farm, views of it are experienced alongside a limited number of surrounding dwellings and in particular with neighbouring Cedar Barn. The two properties share one continuous frontage which, with the proposal in place, retains a consistency in terms of style, design and colouring. This, combined with the various styles used throughout Parkfields Farm, ensures that the difference in material of the door at the appeal property is not immediately apparent. Its design matches the nature of the windows along the front elevation, and while the horizontal stripes are unique to the appeal property, they do not appear overly incongruous or detract from the setting.
9. The Council is concerned that the development is at odds with its Design Supplementary Planning Document 2018 (SPD). While the aluminium door does have a modern feel, the surrounding use of PVC doors and other modern elements within the complex means that this is not overbearing and is in keeping with the surrounding character. In any event, the former agricultural use of the property remains apparent.
10. Concerns have also been raised that the door 'overdomesticates' the appeal property. The Council has also quoted advice offered by Historic England in the 'Guide to Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings'. However, by its very nature the building is domesticated due to its conversion from an agricultural to a residential use. In any event, there are various elements of the conversion indicative of residential use such as letterboxes, burglar alarms, television aerials and satellite dishes. It is not considered that the proposal creates an increased sense of domestication above that already present at the building itself or in the area. It appears appropriate to the aesthetic and in keeping with the current use of the building, while not detracting from its former agricultural nature.
11. The definition of heritage asset in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) includes assets identified by the local planning authority. As the Council considers the appeal property a non-designated heritage asset, paragraph 197 of the Framework requires the effect of the proposal on the significance of the asset to be taken into account. In doing so, a balanced judgment is required having regard to the scale of any harm and the significance of the asset. While there is no evidence provided on the significance of the appeal property, it is recognised that it contributes to the

existing character and appearance of the area. However, for the reasons already outlined above it is not considered that there is significant visual harm to the non-designated heritage asset or group of buildings as a result of the proposal.

12. The proposals would therefore result in a neutral effect on the host dwelling and its setting and in doing so would preserve the character and appearance of the building and the surrounding area as a whole. Accordingly, it would not conflict with Policies E2(g), N1(g) or N1(h) of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011 – 2031 or the Design SPD which, among other things, seek to preserve local character and appearance.

Conditions and Other Considerations

13. As the development has already been carried out, there is no need for a commencement condition. The plan illustrating the door is stated in the decision above.
14. Council has raised assumptions that planning permission for the original conversion of the building to residential use was only approved on the basis that it had historic or landscape significance that it was desirable to safeguard. The Council also assumes that a consistency in detail throughout Parkfields Farm would have been integral to that decision. However, no detailed evidence on the planning history of the site has been provided that shows this to be the case. As such, limited weight has been afforded to these assumptions.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. Having had regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

C Rafferty

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report, and, on that basis, I too agree that the appeal should be allowed without condition.

A U Ghafoor

INSPECTOR