



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 24 June 2019

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th July 2019

Appeal A Ref: APP/H0520/W/18/3214317

Park Farm, The Green, Hilton PE28 9NB

- 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 D Holmes against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/02276/FUL, dated 25 October 2017, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2018.
 - The development proposed is extension to and conversion of existing barns to residential dwelling.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/H0520/Y/18/3214322

Park Farm, The Green, Hilton PE28 9NB

- 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 D Holmes against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 17/02277/LBC, dated 25 October 2017, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2018.
 - The works proposed are the same as Appeal B.
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Decisions

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (HLP) was adopted in May 2019 and supersedes all of the policies referenced in the Council's decision notice. Thus, I have taken into account relevant policies from the HLP as highlighted by the Council and considered the points raised by the appellant on these policies.
3. Following my request, the main parties clarified that amended plans had been submitted and consulted on during the application process. These plans replaced a projecting balcony on the south elevation of the first floor of the new extension with a flush Juliette balcony. Based on this clarification, I have taken the amended plans into account.

Main Issues

4. The main issue for both appeals is whether the proposal would preserve the special interest of the Grade II listed hayloft and cattle shed or any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses.

5. The main issues for Appeal A only are:

- (a) the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties with particular regard to privacy; and
- (b) whether the proposal would make provision for wheeled bins.

Reasons

Listed building

- 6. The appeal site forms part of the wider grounds to Park Farm, a modern chalet bungalow on The Green in Hilton. The site contains a Grade II listed building in the form of a hayloft and cattle shed. The building comprises three ranges set around a courtyard. It is constructed from gault brick with a pantile roof. The threshing barn in the middle western range is the tallest structure and is flanked by stables, a garage and a workshop to the north, and stables, an open-sided utility space and a garage to the south.
- 7. The listed building has historic interest in terms of its agricultural use, notwithstanding that the previous farmhouse at Park Farm has been demolished to make way for the bungalow and the structure is currently used for domestic storage purposes. It also has architectural interest in terms of both the materials and detailing. The northern elevation contains semi-circular headed arches with blind openings while internally there is a timber roof structure throughout. The various spaces within the existing building are subdivided by internal walls which provide an indication of how the building was used. There are some structural issues, including various cracks in internal brick walls, areas of sagging in the roof and timber defects.
- 8. The architectural and historic details greatly inform the special interest and significance of the listed building. In addition, the building is flanked by residential properties and gardens, while to the north and north-east is the wide open space of The Green which contains historic buildings and monuments and lies within Hilton Conservation Area. These surroundings form a key part of the listed building's setting and also contribute to its significance.
- 9. The extension would have a relatively large footprint and utilise a contemporary design. However, the single storey glazed link element would be a lightweight structure leading away from the listed building with little adverse effect. The two storey element plus cinema room would be a larger element but would have a simplicity of form and a flat roof to reduce its overall massing. The plans and images indicate light coloured timber cladding and white render, which would respect the gault brick colour of the listed building.
- 10. The two storey element would also be set sufficiently distant from the listed building due to the glazed link. Thus, approaching from the road, it would not dominate views, while looking back from the garden, it would be clearly separate to the listed building. As noted above, the setting of the listed building currently includes modern housing and the extension would not be out of keeping in that respect. Therefore, the extension would have an acceptable effect on the special interest and significance of the listed building.
- 11. In terms of the conversion, timber lean-tos on the southern and eastern elevations would be removed, although these are modest features of limited quality and interest. The insertion of glazing into existing external openings

- would limit the loss of historic fabric and could be sensitively detailed. The pinning back of doors and shutters would alter their current appearance and use but would at least retain these features.
12. However, existing windows and doors would be removed on the south elevation of the workshop facing the courtyard and replaced with glazing and timber cladding that would bear little resemblance to the current elevation. A similar effect would occur on the north and east elevations of the utility space and garage where the open sides would be infilled. The number of rooflights would be excessive, especially for the threshing barn which would already be illuminated by several windows, and for the study and comms/boiler room. The external visual effect would not be dissimilar to examples of barn conversions nearby in the village. However, the level of external change would lose some of the agricultural character of the listed building by overly domesticating the appearance through the amount, design and location of some of the glazing.
 13. Internally, openings would be inserted in the walls to improve circulation between different parts of the building that are currently separate. While some insertions are limited such as those for the threshing barn, the extent of removal is excessive in places. In particular, the end wall on the eastern side of the workshop would be removed for Bed 5 and an en-suite, while the end wall between the utility space and garage would be removed for Bed 3. It is not clear from the plans what would happen to roof trusses, including in the threshing barn where a mezzanine floor would extend beyond one of the trusses, or the effect of finished floor levels.
 14. Details are also lacking in terms of the repairs identified in the structural report including underpinning, reinforcement and repair of walls, replacement of timber lintels and a new roof structure. These details could be secured by condition, although it would be helpful to understand them upfront before the granting of consent to ascertain the impact on the listed building. In any case, such conditions would not address the negative alterations identified in the previous paragraphs.
 15. The removal of internal and external features without sufficient justification and the lack of clarity regarding the effect on other features in terms of repairs means that the conversion of the listed building as proposed would result in harm to its special interest and significance. The harm to the significance would be less than substantial as the overall form and layout of the listed building would remain. Nevertheless, the harm still carries reasonable weight given the removal of several historic features. Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires less than substantial harm to be weighed against the public benefits of a proposal.
 16. The proposal would create a new dwelling to help boost local housing supply and contribute to the local economy during both the construction and occupation phases. It would represent an efficient use of land in a village location with access to some services and facilities by foot or bike. The proposal could also achieve good energy efficiency standards. Nevertheless, given that the proposal only involves a single new dwelling, the above public benefits would be modest.
 17. The proposal would also restore a currently dilapidated listed building which could continue to deteriorate without an active use. This would enhance the surrounding area including Hilton Conservation Area. It is apparent that a

return to an agricultural use is unlikely given the loss of the farm and the introduction of residential properties either side. There is little evidence as to whether alternative viable uses have been considered, although some form of residential use either separate or ancillary may be the best option for this building. Nevertheless, it has not been demonstrated that the restoration and re-use could only be achieved via the proposed alterations to the listed building and that the impact on historic features is justified. There is every possibility that a more sympathetic scheme could be advanced that limits the loss of such features. As such, I can only give this public benefit moderate weight.

18. Concluding on this main issue for both appeals, the proposal in terms of the conversion would have a negative effect on the special interest of the listed building, where the harm to its significance would not be outweighed by the public benefits. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with HLP Policies LP11 and LP12 which seek proposals that respond well to context. It would also conflict with HLP Policy LP34 which seeks to conserve heritage assets, including features, historic form and fabric that contribute to their special architectural or historic interest, with clear details and justification for any intervention.
19. The proposal would also conflict with NPPF paragraph 196 and fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building contrary to Sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Living conditions

20. There are 3 residential properties to the west of the appeal site. The shared boundary comprises a row of conifer hedging approximately 3-4 metres tall. The roofs and first floor rear elevations of Littleford and Heronswood are visible over the hedge from the space to the south of the listed building. Crossbrook is set further away to the south behind more vegetation.
21. The extension would be located directly to the east of Littleford and Heronswood. There would be no first floor windows on the western elevation of the extension which would avoid any direct overlooking. The nearest first floor window on the southern elevation would serve an en-suite and so could be obscured glazed. The bedroom windows further along this elevation, including the Juliette balcony, would only have an oblique view towards Crossbrook and Littleford and their rear gardens, with no view of Heronswood. The original balcony has been removed from the proposed drawings meaning that no-one would be able to stand outside at first floor and look directly westwards. Thus, there would be no negative effects on living conditions in terms of privacy.
22. The existing boundary hedge would largely screen the ground floor parts of the extension from the rear of these two neighbouring properties. The first floor would be more visible but set back from the boundary with its height restricted by the flat roof to make it smaller than the height of the threshing barn. As such, it would not negatively affect the living conditions of neighbouring properties in terms of light or outlook.
23. Concluding on this main issue for Appeal A, the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties. Therefore, it would accord with HLP Policy LP14 which seeks a high standard of amenity and the avoidance of overlooking causing a loss of privacy.

Wheeled bins

24. The Council's Development Contributions Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (SPD) sets out that financial contributions are required to allow for the provision of appropriate wheeled bins. The Council's Waste Team has confirmed that there are no issues and the property would receive a set of bins, but the decision notice still requires a unilateral undertaking (UU) for the contribution.
25. While the appellant has indicated that a UU would be provided during the course of the appeal, I have not had any sight of this document. As such, I am unable to reach a conclusion on this main issue for Appeal A and any compliance with the SPD and HLP Policy LP4 which seeks contributions towards the provision of infrastructure, including waste facilities, to make a proposal acceptable in planning terms. For the avoidance of doubt, even if a completed and satisfactory UU had been before me, it would not have altered my overall decision on Appeal A given the listed building harm I have identified.

Other Matters

26. The appellant indicates that the Council's 5 year housing supply position is in some doubt. I have little information on this matter, but even if there was a lack of a 5 year supply, the application of policies in the NPPF that protect heritage assets provide a clear reason for refusing the proposal. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development in NPPF paragraph 11 would not apply. Additionally, while the proposal would not conflict with a number of policies in the HLP as highlighted by the appellant, this does not outweigh the conflict I have identified with HLP Policies LP11, LP12 and LP34.

Conclusions

27. The proposal in both appeals would fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building and cause harm to its significance with insufficient public benefits. For this reason, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR