



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 June 2020

by Martin Small, BA (Hons), BPI, DipCM, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/20/3245866

Old House Farm, The Street, Slinfold, RH13 0RS

- 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 R Finch-Hatton against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref: DC/19/1958 dated 26 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 21 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'the conversion and extension of existing barn to form a two-bedroom dwelling with associated parking facilities – amendment to planning permission DC/18/1984'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion and extension of existing barn to form a two-bedroom dwelling with associated parking facilities at Old House Farm, The Street, Slinfold, RH13 0RS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: DC/19/1958 dated 26 September 2019, and subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the barn and area, with particular regard to the settings of the Grade II listed Old House Farm and of the Slindon Conservation Area (SCA).

Reasons

3. Old House Farm sits within a large garden set back from The Street. Vehicular access to the property is via a drive to a parking and turning area to the west of the dwelling. This drive also provides access to a wooden-framed and clad barn dating, from the evidence before me, from the 17th century. The barn has a later lean-to addition to its north side. The barn is not listed in its own right but historically formed part of the same farmstead as the 16th century Old House Farm, which is Grade II listed. The dwelling, its garden and the access to the property, but not the barn, lie within the SCA.
4. Planning permission was granted in January 2019 for the conversion and extension of the barn to a two bedroom dwelling, with the proposed extension replacing, but being larger than, the existing lean-to addition (DC/18/1984). I noted during my site visit that the barn was being used for storage and the permission had not been implemented.

5. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the setting of listed buildings. In addition, paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight to be given to the asset's conservation. Harm to the significance of an asset can be caused by development within its setting, as defined in the Glossary to the Framework.
6. The barn is within the setting of Old House Farm and the SCA. The barn is physically and perceptually separated from the listed building by a post and rail fence and vegetation alongside the access to the property bounding the garden to Old House Farm. Even so, I observed during my site visit that there is intervisibility between the two buildings.
7. However, Old House Farm is viewed from The Street in its garden setting rather than in the context of the barn. From The Street the barn is largely hidden, with only a brief glimpse of the southern roof slope. This is seen in the context of the property to the south-east, Barn Cottage, rather than Old House Farm. In visual terms therefore, the barn makes only a limited contribution to the settings of Old House Farm and the SCA. Nevertheless, the historic relationship of the barn to the former farmhouse contributes to the significance of both buildings.
8. The proposal is to convert the barn to a two bedroom dwelling with the replacement of the existing lean-to with a new extension. The proposed extension would be larger than the permitted extension, being wider, higher and with a gable end rather than the approved hipped end, but it would be of the same depth. The increased bulk of the extension would render it less subservient to the main barn than the approved extension, but the ridge height would still be below that of the main barn and the extension would still be inset from the eastern elevation of the barn. It would therefore still be possible to appreciate the original form of the barn.
9. The increase in massing would not significantly or unacceptably alter the hierarchical relationship between the extended barn and Old House Farm, nor would it significantly diminish the physical separation between the two buildings. The distinction between the two as original farmhouse and ancillary barn would still be appreciable from the plainer architectural style and materials of the barn. It would thus continue to inform the historic use of Old House Farm. I see no reason why the proposal would lead to an increase in domesticity over and above the approved development.
10. The barn and Old House Farm have gable ends, as does the property to the south of the barn, Barn Cottage. The Council has provided no evidence of any local vernacular architectural style. However, I observed during my site visit that the dwellings in the village have a mixture of gable ends and hipped roofs. The proposed gable end would therefore not be at odds with the architectural style and character of the barn, Old House Farm nor a locally distinctive vernacular or character of the wider area.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not unacceptably harm the character or appearance of the main barn nor of the wider area, nor would it harm the setting of either Old House Farm or the SCA. The setting of both designated heritage assets would therefore be preserved.

12. Accordingly, the proposal would not conflict with Policies 25, 32 or 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) (2015) (HDPF). These policies, in combination and amongst other things, seek to protect landscape and townscape character and require high quality design that complements locally distinctive character and heritage. The proposal would accord with Policy 34 of the HPDF which seeks to protect the heritage assets of the district.
13. The proposed development would not conflict with Policies 1 or 5 of the Slinfold Neighbourhood Plan 2014-2031 (2018) which, in combination, require special regard to be paid to the setting of the SCA and supports development proposals that respect the design of the surrounding area as detailed in the Slinfold Parish Design Statement. Furthermore, the proposed development would not conflict with paragraph 193 of the Framework.

Other Matters

14. The ability of the Council to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites is a matter of dispute between the main parties. However, irrespective of my decision on this appeal, planning permission exists for the conversion of the barn to a dwelling. Therefore, my decision cannot make any difference to the Council's 5-year housing land supply and so I do not need to consider this matter further.

Conditions

15. In addition to the standard time limit for commencement, the Council has suggested a number of conditions were planning permission to be granted. I have considered these conditions in the light of the tests set out in paragraph 55 of the Framework, amending them where necessary for the sake of clarity and precision and logic of order.
16. Accordance with the approved drawings is necessary in the interests of certainty and a condition regarding materials is necessary in the interests of the character and appearance of the area. A restriction on construction working hours is necessary to protect the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby dwellings. A limitation on water usage and a requirement for broadband infrastructure are necessary in the interests of sustainability and to ensure compliance with Policy 37 of the HPDF.
17. The provision of the parking, turning and access facilities prior to the occupation of the dwelling is necessary in the interests of highway safety. Cycle parking facilities are necessary to encourage the use of modes of transport other than the private car and refuse / recycling facilities are necessary to protect the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of the occupiers of nearby properties.
18. The restriction of permitted development rights for external alterations or extensions, buildings or enclosures falling within Schedule 2, Part 1, Classes A, B, C, D, E, F, G and H is justified, exceptionally, in the interests of the character and appearance of the building and the setting of Old House Farm and the SCA.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, the appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted subject to conditions.

Martin Small

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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 following approved drawings: RFH/19/01A Location and Site Plan, RFH/19/02A Existing Plans, Sections and Elevations and RFH/19/03A Proposed Plans, Sections and Elevations.
- 3) The materials to be used in the development hereby permitted shall strictly accord with those indicated on the approved drawing RFH/19/03A unless details of alternative materials have been submitted and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development above ground floor slab level.
- 4) Demolition or construction works shall take place only between 08:00 hours to 18:00 hours Mondays to Fridays and 08:00 hours to 13:00 hours on Saturdays and shall not take place at any time on Sundays or on Bank or Public Holidays.
- 5) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the Buildings Regulations Optional Requirement G2 limiting the water usage of the dwelling to a maximum of 110 litres per person per day has been complied with.
- 6) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the necessary in-building physical infrastructure and external site-wide infrastructure to enable superfast broadband speeds of at least 30 megabytes per second through full fibre broadband connection has been provided to the premises. The infrastructure shall thereafter be retained.
- 7) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the parking, turning and access facilities necessary to serve that dwelling have been implemented in accordance with the approved details as shown on plan RFH/19/01A. The facilities shall thereafter be retained as such.
- 8) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the cycle parking facilities serving it have been provided within the associated curtilage for that dwelling. The cycle parking facilities shall thereafter be retained for their designated use.
- 9) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until provision for the storage of refuse and recycling has been provided within the associated curtilage for that dwelling. The facilities shall thereafter be retained for use at all times.
- 10) Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (and/or any Order revoking and re-enacting that Order, with or without modification) no development falling within Classes A, B, C, D, E, F, G or H of Part 1 of Schedule 2 of the Order shall

be erected, constructed or placed within the curtilage of the dwelling hereby permitted without express planning consent from the Local Planning Authority first being obtained.

End of Schedule