



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2020

by Jillian Rann BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P4415/W/20/3257917

**Park House, Park Hill Farm, Swallownest, Sheffield, South Yorkshire
S26 4UZ**

- 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 Simon Parker against the decision of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RB2020/0077, dated 15 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 18 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is construction of detached house and attached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As there were discrepancies between some of the drawings provided I have sought clarification on this matter. The main parties have subsequently confirmed the Council's decision was based on the following drawings: Site Location Plan dated 09/11/2018; un-numbered 1:500 Site Layout Plan; Ground Floor Plan drawing number 2020-52-1, dated January 2020; First and Second Floors drawing number 2020-52-2, dated January 2020; and Section and Elevations drawing number 2020-52-3, dated January 2020. Accordingly, I have also based my decision on those drawings.
3. The appeal site is close to two grade II listed buildings, which are described in their list descriptions as 'Barn flanking west side of farm yard at Park Hill' and 'Cowhouse flanking east side of farm yard at Park Hill Farm'. Since they were listed in August 1986, the buildings have been converted to residential use. They are now known as 'The Winnows' and 'The Barn' respectively. For conciseness and the avoidance of doubt I have used the buildings' current names throughout my decision. I am mindful of my statutory duties under section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) and have considered the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the setting of the grade II listed buildings now known as 'The Winnows' and 'The Barn'; and whether a satisfactory access to the site would be provided, having regard to the safety of all users.

Reasons

Setting of listed buildings

5. The Winnows and The Barn are grade II listed former agricultural buildings, a former barn and cow house, dating from the early to mid-19th century. Both buildings adjoin Park House, the farmstead's former farmhouse, to form a large courtyard. Whilst the buildings have subsequently been converted to residential use, they have retained distinctive features and elements of detailing which reflect their historic agricultural function. Their historic agricultural use and the form and layout of the former farmyard therefore remain clearly legible.
6. The former agricultural buildings and the land immediately around them are surrounded by open fields and located at the end of a long drive. They have thus maintained a sense of connection to their rural surroundings and of separation and distinction from the suburban development which has gradually grown up in the wider area nearby.
7. The appeal site is located to the north east of The Barn and Park House, outside the historic courtyard. It is currently part of the garden of the former farmhouse. However, the evidence indicates that it has historically formed part of the wider farmstead and has been occupied by agricultural structures at points in the past. Those have subsequently been removed and part of the site is now occupied by a large domestic garage. However, as part of the former farmhouse's garden, enclosed by trees and hedges, the site is still read as part of what remains of the historic farm complex. As such, in its current form the site contributes to the preservation of the legibility of the historic farm complex and to the setting of the listed buildings within it.
8. The proposed dwelling would be a tall two storey structure with a large footprint and a substantial volume and massing. Its roof, housing a further level of accommodation, would appear larger than those of the historic agricultural buildings around the nearby courtyard. As land levels generally rise between the front and rear parts of the site, the dwelling would also be situated at a higher level than the historic farm courtyard and the listed former agricultural buildings around it.
9. The dwelling's substantial height and scale in relation to the historic buildings around the former farm courtyard would thus be evident from points within the former farmstead site. It would also be clearly visible alongside and to the rear of those historic buildings, including the listed former barns, from public vantage points on Park Hill.
10. In that context, the dwelling would appear as a discordantly large structure that would fail to respect the scale of the former agricultural buildings around the adjacent courtyard. It would unduly dominate and overwhelm those historic buildings and erode the sense of space around them.
11. The detailing and appearance of the dwelling would be unquestionably domestic. As such, it would not respect the agricultural character or appearance of the historic former farm buildings alongside it, despite the intended use of matching materials. The proposal would thus result in the encroachment of an incongruously domestic form of development into the immediate surroundings of those historic rural buildings. It would therefore significantly erode the legibility of the historic farmstead as well as the sense of

distinctiveness and separation between the historic farmstead and the modern suburban development which has subsequently grown up around it.

12. The site is part of residential allocation, H85, in the Rotherham Local Plan: Sites and Policies document (the S&P document). The site development guidelines for the allocation, set out in the S&P document, specifically require the provision of a 'sizeable stand-off zone' around the farm, within which built development will not be permitted, to protect the rural setting of the two listed buildings within the site. For the reasons given, the proposed dwelling would not comply with those guidelines.
13. My attention has been drawn to proposals for housing on part of the open land to the east of the site, within the boundary of allocation H85. However, I have considered the appeal on its own planning merits. That proposal relating to land further away from the listed buildings does not alter my conclusions regarding the harm I have identified.
14. Given the above, the development would cause harm to the setting of the listed buildings. The harm would be less than substantial. However, I give considerable importance and weight to that harm. The Framework requires any such harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
15. The development would include the removal of the existing single storey detached garage from the site. As a modern structure of domestic appearance the garage does not contribute to the setting of the listed buildings at present. Nonetheless, the harm arising from the much larger residential dwelling now proposed would not be offset or outweighed by any public benefits arising from the removal of that more modest structure.
16. The development would provide a new dwelling, contributing to housing supply. However, any such public benefits arising from the single dwelling proposed would be very modest and do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
17. Therefore, the proposed development would cause harm to the setting of the listed buildings now known as 'The Winnows' and 'The Barn'. It would conflict with Policy CS 23 of the Rotherham Local Plan: Core Strategy and Policy SP 40 of the S&P document, which support the conservation of the borough's heritage assets and state that development which has an adverse effect on the setting of listed buildings will not be acceptable. It would conflict with the site development guidelines for allocation reference H85 in the S&P document as set out above. It would also conflict with the Framework, which requires great weight to be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.

Whether a satisfactory access would be provided

18. The proposed house would be served by an existing access drive from Park Hill. That access drive currently serves the three dwellings around the former farm courtyard and what appears to be a further bungalow west of The Winnows. As part of the development, the width of the existing access drive would be increased to 3.7m and the existing passing place would be retained.
19. The South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide (the RDG) includes guidance on the design of residential streets. The Council has raised concerns that the width of the site's existing access drive at its junction with Park Hill is inadequate to cater for the two-way passing of vehicles. Based on the guidance in the RDG, and with reference to what it considers to be restricted visibility at its junction

with Park Hill, the Council has indicated that the initial section of the access drive should be widened further, to a width of 5m.

20. Park Hill in the vicinity of the site access has a speed limit of 40mph. Its alignment is relatively straight to the west/north west of the site access junction, but it rises and curves slightly to the east/south east. Visibility in that direction may therefore be restricted to some degree.
21. However, the existing access drive already serves several existing residential properties. I have not been presented with any substantive evidence to indicate that the use of that access drive or its junction with Park Hill in association with those existing properties has given rise to significant issues of vehicle or pedestrian safety.
22. The single dwelling proposed would not result in a significant increase in the number or frequency of vehicles or pedestrians using the existing access drive or entering or leaving the site from that junction. The access drive is long and straight, such that vehicles travelling along it would have sight of vehicles approaching in the other direction. The passing place along its length would allow an opportunity for vehicles to pass. Even if a vehicle had to wait on Park Hill for another vehicle to leave the access drive, such waiting would be likely to be of limited duration. The limited number of additional vehicles arising from the development would be unlikely to significantly increase the likelihood of such circumstances occurring compared to the existing situation.
23. Therefore, based on the evidence before me, I conclude that the development would be unlikely to give rise to significant adverse implications for highway safety, despite some technical conflict with the guidance in the RDG. I therefore conclude that a satisfactory access to the site would be provided, having regard to the safety of all users. The development would not conflict with Policy SP 26 of the S&P document which requires that the highway network is, or can be made, suitable to cope with the traffic generated. Nor would it conflict with the Framework, which requires that safe and suitable access to development sites can be achieved for all users and states that development should only be refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Other Matters

24. Matters relating to the processing and consideration of the application by the Council do not alter my conclusions above, which are based on the planning merits of the proposal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

25. I conclude that the development would result in harm to the setting of nearby listed buildings. That harm would not be outweighed by any public benefits of the scheme. Based on the evidence before me, I find that the development would be unlikely to cause harm to highway safety. However, the absence of harm in that regard is neutral rather than a factor weighing in favour of the proposal.
26. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal is dismissed.

Jillian Rann
INSPECTOR