



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 16 June 2021

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons)DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/21/3270130

Parkfields Farm, Silverstone Road, Stowe, Buckingham MK18 5LQ

- 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 C Pullen (F H Pullin & Sons Limited) against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01930/APP, dated 15 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as retrospective application in relation to the installation of two ground source heat pumps and their housings to serve holiday/short term lets consented under planning application 18/00352/APP.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the installation of two ground source heat pumps and their housings to serve holiday/short term lets consented under planning application 18/00352/APP at Parkfields Farm, Silverstone Road, Stowe, Buckingham MK18 5LQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/01930/APP, dated 15 June 2020, and the plans submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the development in the header above is taken from the application form. My decision omits reference to it being a retrospective application as this does not describe the development and so is superfluous.
3. The scheme has been completed, seemingly in accordance with the appeal plans. My assessment is made on the basis of what I saw on my visit as well as the drawings.
4. The emerging Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (the eLP) has been the subject of examination and proposed modifications have been consulted upon. However, it is unclear whether there are unresolved objections to referred to eLP policies and so they attract moderate weight in my assessment.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host buildings and the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal relates to 2 converted barns, annotated as barn 5 and barn 6 on the submitted plans. The buildings are at right angles and form 2 sides of an enclosed yard. The site forms part of a larger farm complex set in an extensive tract of fields and which is in a designated area of attractive landscape. A

public bridleway runs from the road across fields to the south and through the farm complex.

7. One of the heat pumps and its housing is on the west elevation of barn 5 while the other is attached to barn 6. The barn 5 addition is seen alongside a similar sized projection to the building. This is an original part of the barn rather than a recent addition. Nevertheless, due to its existence, the pump housing does not interrupt an otherwise linear building. Furthermore, the pump house extension is constructed of matching brick and roof tiles with a rough wooden door and no windows. As such, it is of simple appearance and blends in with the agricultural feel of the former barn.
8. The other pump housing extends out beyond barn 6's flat southern elevation. However, it does not stand out as an unusual projection as it is next to a close-boarded gate and fence that are perpendicular to the building. Moreover, the addition is low, constructed of matching brickwork and of a simple utilitarian style that reflects the building's agricultural origins. The roof pitches on the housing are at odds with that on the main roof but by virtue of its small scale and sympathetic functional design, it does not appear as an alien addition.
9. The heat pumps are on the elevations that are more visible from surrounding land compared to those facing into the yard. Even so, they are not easily seen from the public bridleway due to land level differences and intervening vegetation and structures. Where viewed, the housings appear as minor additions that respect the general style of the buildings to which they are attached. As such, they are in keeping with the wider area.
10. For the above reasons, I conclude the development causes no harm to the character and appearance of the host buildings and the area. In these regards, it accords with policies GP9 and GP35 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan 2004 (LP). Amongst other things, these seek to ensure development respects the characteristics of the site and building tradition. As the scheme seeks permission for additions to barn conversions rather than for conversion works, LP policy RA.11 is not strictly relevant in the consideration of this main issue.

Conditions and Conclusion

11. The Council suggest conditions that require the provision and retention of landscaping along the west boundary of the site. However, this is unnecessary as the development has no detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the building and area, regardless of the provision of screening.
12. For the above reasons, I find the scheme accords with the development plan when read as a whole. Therefore, I conclude the appeal should succeed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR