



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2022

by J Wilson BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI DMS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/D/21/3288202

Lincombe Barn, Lane to Hexdown Farm, Bigbury, Devon, TQ7 4BD

- 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 Mrs Margie Markwick against the decision of South Hams District Council.
 - The application Ref 2750/21/HHO, dated 10 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is an external staircase.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an external staircase at Lincombe Barn, Lane to Hexdown Farm, Bigbury, TQ7 4BD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2750/21/HHO, dated 10 July 2021, and the plans submitted with it.

Preliminary Matters

2. The works have been carried out and I have dealt with the appeal on the basis that it seeks retrospective permission.
3. I have amended the description of development to remove words which are not acts of development.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the development on: a) the character and appearance of the area upon the character of a non-designated heritage asset; and b) on the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Character and appearance

5. Lincombe Barn has a strong traditional character. Though it has been modernised by its conversion to residential use its origins are believed to have been a 'Shippon' (or cow byre). The barn is set into a bank and is single storey at the roadside and two storeys to the other. Its significance as a non-designated heritage asset stems from its traditional architecture and simple rustic appearance.
6. The Council identify the building as a non-designated heritage asset and this is acknowledged by the appellant. The Glossary to the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') defines a heritage asset as "a building ... identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local

- listing)”. The Council have identified it as such, and this is underpinned by a specific mention in the Bigbury Parish Neighbourhood Plan. This means that I have to have regard to the building as a non-designated heritage asset as the neighbourhood plan forms part of the development plan.
7. Paragraph 203 of the Framework requires that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account though this involves, making a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of harm and the significance of the asset.
 8. The Councils guidance on ‘Traditional Farm Building – Their Adaptation and Reuse’ states that the general absence of extensions and additions to traditional farm buildings is an aspect of their historic and authentic character. It states that contemporary designs which relate to the simple lines of the original can also provide a more relevant solution. In this case the staircase is on the rear, albeit largest elevation, of the building.
 9. Even though it represents an addition which dilutes the original simplicity of the barn, when considered in the context of its location and the changes made to the Barn to realise its conversion, I consider that it does not fundamentally alter its appearance. It exhibits traditional detailing and the construction reflects details found elsewhere on the building using materials and finished treatments found on the side extension.
 10. Taking all of these factors together, I do not agree that the staircase would be incongruous or harmful to the character of the Barn nor do I find that it represents an alien feature.
 11. For these reasons I find no overriding conflict with Policies TTV29, DEV20, DEV21, or DEV23, of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 (2019) (the Local Plan); with Policies BP2, BP7, or BP23 of the Bigbury Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2034 (2019) (BNP) or the Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document 2020 including the “Traditional Farm Buildings Guidance” 2020.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

12. The appeal site is located within the AONB. The Framework states that within AONBs great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty and the conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage. The barn is located within a rural setting and even though extensive views are available to the east, the staircase would not, in itself, have a material impact on the wider landscape setting of the AONB. Therefore, there would be no conflict with Policy DEV25 of the Local Plan or with Policy BP18 of the BNP.

Other Matters

13. A representation has been received raising objection to the staircase on a similar basis to the matters raised by the Council to which I have responded above. It also highlights the proximity to the barn to a public footpath though I have no evidence before me of the position or route of the footpath in relation to the barn. Other matters raised relate to non-indigenous planting on the boundary to the barn in respect of the landscaping scheme when the barn was converted though this is not a matter within the remit of this appeal.

Conditions

14. Three conditions have been suggested by the Council. The first a standard time limit, the second relating to materials and the third relating to compliance with the approved plans. As the development has already been completed there is no justification for adding these conditions.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal is allowed in the terms set out above.

J Wilson

INSPECTOR