
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 February 2022

by Darren Hendley BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21ST February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B3030/D/21/3285122

Grange Farm, Gainsborough Road, Girton NG23 7HX

- 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 S Price against the decision of Newark & Sherwood District Council.
 - The application Ref: 21/01528/HOUSE, dated 6 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 August 2021.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension to existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey extension to the existing dwelling at Grange Farm, Gainsborough Road, Girton NG23 7HX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 21/01528/HOUSE, dated 6 July 2021, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) whether the proposal would be in a suitable location for such development with regard to the effect on the character and appearance of the building and the area; and (ii) the effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property comprises a converted threshing barn. It is set out in a linear fashion and a mezzanine floor has been inserted so that it provides 2 storeys of accommodation across the property. The openings on the barn have been maintained, albeit some of the inserted windows are rather domestic in their appearance, as is a walled garden area that has been created. The brick and roof detailing appear largely intact, as does its internal spatial quality. Overall, it maintains its appearance as a traditional rural building.
4. The property forms part of a broader complex of converted buildings that are set out in a courtyard-like manner. The former threshing barn is the most dominant feature amongst the converted buildings due to its height and form. It faces towards Grange Farm, a large rural dwelling that retains its traditional presence in this cluster of buildings that formerly made up the farmstead. There is also a modern barn-like building close by, together with an adjacent

hardstanding area. The buildings are not located within a settlement. The surroundings are distinctly countryside in character, with occasional farmsteads or small groups of buildings.

5. The Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) Conversion of Traditional Rural Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (2014) (SPD) sets out a restrictive approach on extending this type of building in such a location. It states that permission will not normally be given for the reconstruction of previously demolished buildings or parts of buildings in rural areas. It goes on to say that exceptions may be made where the applicant can provide compelling evidence of the previous existence and scale of the demolished structure and its restoration contributes significantly to the viability or character of the development.
6. The area of the appeal site where the proposed extension would be sited consists of an area of loose stone that lies adjacent to the rear of the property. It is agreed between the main parties that a structure was historically found in this area. This comprised an open fronted Waggon House. There is no sign of this structure now. Whilst there is some difference in opinion over whether it was physically connected to the barn, even if it was not, it would have been in close proximity. In these circumstances, it is reasonable that the guidance set out in the SPD should be considered.
7. The proposed extension would be constructed in a similar form to the single storey buildings that are found on this former farmstead. The roof pitch and plain gable end would be in keeping, as would the use of matching brick and pantiles. The fenestration would reflect the existing conversion and so it would be somewhat domestic. The proposed extension would however be subordinate to the existing conversion and the grouping of buildings. Its scale would be in keeping and it would sit comfortably within its rural surroundings.
8. In overall terms, the effect of the proposed extension on rural character, in terms of the barn conversion, the former farmstead and the wider countryside surroundings would be neutral. With regard to the SPD, it would not therefore contribute significantly to the character of the development. There is not substantive evidence before me on viability.
9. The SPD provides other relevant guidance and in this regard the proposed extension would be in accordance. It would not compromise the architectural integrity and building form. There would also be no substantial impact upon the character of the wider landscape setting due to the modest nature of the proposal and its design. It would also retain the recognisable layout of these former farm buildings, when the previous Waggon House is considered. It would respect the original arrangement of the farm-building group and develop a scheme complimentary to it. As a result, it would not constitute unjustified rural development.
10. Ultimately, what is of most importance is maintaining the rural character of the converted threshing barn and the barn range. Based on the traditional form, scale, design and materials, this would be achieved. This is notwithstanding that it would not comply with the strict test that the SPD applies to contributing significantly to the viability or character.
11. Of the development plan policies that are cited in the Council's reason for refusal, Policy DM6 of the LDF Allocations & Development Management

Development Plan Document (2013) (Allocations & Development Management DPD) points to the use of a Supplementary Planning Document to assess the design based criteria that it sets out. However, none of these criteria concern the higher test that the SPD sets out that, in effect, there must be some benefit by way of character or viability. The criteria in this policy concern matters that relate to respecting the character and which the proposal would achieve, for the reasons that I have set out.

12. I am therefore not persuaded that there is particular development plan policy support from the stringent approach that the SPD takes in this regard. The same applies in relation to where Policy DM8 of the Allocations & Development Management DPD refers to that the detailed assessment of proposals will be made against a Supplementary Planning Document.
13. In taking the above considerations together, I conclude that the proposal would be in a suitable location for such development with regard to the effect on the character and appearance of the building and the area. As such, it would comply with Core Policy 9 of the LDF Amended Core Strategy (2019) (Core Strategy) and Policies DM5, DM6 and DM8 of the Allocations & Development Management DPD where they are concerned collectively with a high standard of design, distinctiveness, the character and built form representing the surrounding area, including with regard to scale, form, design, materials and detailing, and conversions without significant extension, amongst other considerations.
14. The proposal would not comply with the SPD in as far as it would not contribute significantly to the viability or character. However, as a consideration, this degree of conflict is outweighed by that it would not have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the building and the area in this instance. The proposal would also accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) with the emphasis it puts on achieving well designed places.

Non-Designated Heritage Asset

15. The Council consider that the appeal property is a non-designated heritage asset and the appellant's Heritage Statement agrees with this view. As it maintains some quality as a converted threshing barn, it has historical interest as a traditional rural building that still exhibits its overall form. Some of its associated features relate to its original function. It holds moderate significance in this regard.
16. Given that the significance arises from the building and its contribution to the grouping, I reach the same conclusion as above. The proposal would be a neutral addition to the asset with its overall form as a single storey extension that has simple barn like detailing, albeit it would also be domestic in appearance. It would not have a harmful effect on the existing fabric of the building.
17. The courtyard arrangement and the form of the buildings results in the continuing historic group value. The proposed extension would be a modest addition and would not detract from the courtyard layout with its location on the opposite side of the barn. The effect on the significance in this respect would also not be harmful.

18. The test that the SPD applies in relation to contributing significantly to the viability or character has also been referred to in the context of heritage. However, this somewhat goes beyond the test which the Framework sets out with regard to a non-designated heritage asset that a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. As there is no harm or loss to the significance, the proposal does not need to deliver any tangible heritage benefit. No balanced judgment therefore needs to be made.
19. I conclude that the proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset. Therefore, it would comply with Core Policy 14 of the Core Strategy and Policy DM9 of the Allocations & Development Management DPD where they concern a non-designated heritage asset and securing the continued protection or enhancement of heritage assets. It would also comply with Core Policy 9, and Policies DM5, DM6 and DM8 where they refer to heritage asset related matters.
20. It would also comply with the SPD in this regard as it would not diminish from the value of the traditional rural building, as well as the Framework by way of the protection it affords the significance of a non-designated heritage asset.

Other Matters

21. The main issues are centred on character and appearance, and heritage. As I have found the proposal to be not unacceptable on these grounds, matters that have been raised in relation to the planning history of the site by way of the approved red line plan, curtilage and what constitutes the planning unit do not change my view and nor does whether or not the proposed extension would exceed the walled garden area.

Conditions

22. In addition to the timescale for implementation, I have imposed a condition concerning the approved plans for the purpose of certainty. In order to protect the character and appearance of the building and the area, as well as the significance of the non-designated heritage asset, conditions are also imposed concerning the external materials and detailed features, as well as preventing the insertion of trickle vents. Where I have altered the wording of the conditions put forward by the Council, I have done so in the interests of precision and without changing their overall meaning.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all matters that have been raised, the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions.

Darren Hendley

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 plans: GFG/20/004/ Revision A Location Plan, GFG/20/003/ Revision E Proposed Elevations, GFG/20/002/ Revision F Proposed Plans.
- 3) No above ground works shall take place until details/samples of the external facing materials have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. These shall include details of the colour and finish and which in relation to the roof shall be natural red clay non-interlocking pantiles with no dry fix ridge system, but flush verges and mortar bedded half round copings. The relevant works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved sample details.
- 4) No above ground works shall take place until a sample panel of all new facing brickwork showing the proposed bricks, face-bond and pointing mortar have been provided on site and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved sample panel.
- 5) No above ground works shall take place until details of the design of the external windows including roof windows, doors and their immediate surrounds, including details of glazing and glazing bars, which shall be of timber construction; the treatment of window and door heads and cills; verges and eaves; and rainwater goods, including drawings and sections at a scale 1:10 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and thereafter maintained.
- 6) No trickle vents shall be inserted into the doors or windows of the development hereby permitted.