



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 April 2022

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26th May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/G2435/D/22/3293692

The Old Granary, Main Street, Snarestone, DE12 7DB

- 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 Deborah Evans against the decision of North West Leicestershire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00995/FUL, dated 18 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2021.
 - The development proposed is replace the timber windows with powder coated aluminium windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for replace the timber windows with powder coated aluminium windows at The Old Granary, Main Street, Snarestone, DE12 7DB in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 21/01886/FUL, dated 18 May 2021 and in accordance with the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision;
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 30.29995 (window schedule); 100/087/2021 rev A Proposed Elevations; Scale Profile Information; Large Scale Sections Information.
 - 3) Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, full details of the proposed grey powder coating finish (including RAL code or similar) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) Prior to commencement of the development hereby permitted, large scale section drawings of the proposed windows and doors shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The drawings shall indicate the proposed glazing and beading. The drawings shall indicate the outer frame, sash, mid rail and sill of the proposed doors. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
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Preliminary Matter

2. I have taken the description of development from the Council's decision notice. Part of the description of development on the application form sets out the development case.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are whether the proposed development would preserve the setting of the nearby Listed Building and its effect on the character and appearance of the Snarestone Conservation Area.

Reasons

Setting of a Listed Building

4. Under Section 66 of the Planning Act¹, local planning authorities are required, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a Listed Building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting.
5. Manor Farmhouse is a Grade II Listed Building dating from the late 18th Century. Notable for its red brick construction with stone cornice to the front, sash windows with stone sills and hipped slate roof with two ridge stacks and two end stacks to the rear to the side.
6. The appeal property comprises one of a number of converted farm buildings and is located some considerable distance away from Manor Farmhouse and is separated from it by other dwellings. Whilst the tall stacks of Manor Farmhouse are visible from the appeal property's garden behind other buildings and amongst trees, the property appears well-separated from the Grade II Listed Building.
7. The appeal property's overall appearance as one of a number of agricultural buildings converted to dwellings and as part of a much wider area containing brick-built dwellings, including several new build properties, of traditional yet clearly modern and updated appearance, leads it to appear in keeping within the extended setting of the Listed Building.
8. Small-scale changes not impacting significantly on the traditional agricultural form of the appeal property would have little if any discernible impact on the setting of the Listed Building due to the considerable distance between the two properties; the presence of buildings, boundaries and greenery between the Listed Building and the appeal property; and the retention of the appeal property's overall traditional agricultural form and appearance, characteristic of its immediate surroundings and of the wider context of the area.
9. The proposed changes to the doors and windows of the appeal property would amount to small-scale changes that would be apparent within the immediate context of the appeal property, which itself sits within the Snarestone Conservation Area, but which would have no notable effect on and would preserve the setting of, Manor Farmhouse, a Listed Building.

¹ Reference: Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

10. Consequently, I am satisfied that the proposal would preserve the setting of Manor Farmhouse and would not be contrary to the National Planning Framework or to Policy He1 of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan (2021), which together amongst other things, protect heritage assets.

Character and Appearance

11. Like other buildings around it, the appeal property is a converted two storey brick and slate barn. It has a number of domestic scale timber windows with a stained finish along with four former cart door openings.
12. The appeal property is located within the Snarestone Conservation Area, which is characterised by the presence of a number of grand period properties, including Manor Farmhouse, along with a range of agricultural workers cottages and converted former agricultural buildings, largely distributed individually and in small clusters, in an overall linear form along Main Street.
13. The common use of red brick - and occasional stone dressings to the grander properties - along with dark plain tile roofs and slate roofs, lends a sense of uniformity, as does the presence of vertical and horizontal slash windows to the original residential buildings; the retention of the overall architectural integrity of converted agricultural buildings; and the presence of brick walls and hedgerows to many boundaries.
14. Whilst the appeal property is largely hidden away from Main Street, behind other buildings, it features as part of a former agricultural courtyard to the front and opens out to gardens with traditional and modern development beyond, to the rear. It shares many characteristics with surrounding buildings, most notable of which are its brick and slate construction and its overall traditional and in this case, converted barn appearance.
15. Whilst the overall appearance of the appeal property, notably its agricultural form and its brick and slate construction, makes a valuable contribution to the Snarestone Conservation Area, I consider the fine detail of the appeal property's existing windows and doors to be of little architectural merit.
16. I observed during my site visit that the existing window frames appear tired and in some places, rotten and in this regard I note the appellant's comment on the application form that the windows themselves are not especially old, yet they are neither water-tight nor draft-proof. By way of contrast, I am mindful that the proposed development would significantly improve heat retention and energy efficiency.
17. During my site visit, I observed the presence of windows similar in appearance to the development proposed, on both a traditional barn and on new-build housing constructed close to the rear of the appeal property. These windows appear attractive and entirely in keeping with their surroundings – to my mind, they enhance the appearance of the Conservation Area by introducing appropriate modern materials in a sympathetic manner.
18. The prevalence of such windows on the new estate of houses backing on to the appeal property, as well as to an existing converted barn, mean that the proposed development would be sympathetic to and fit comfortably within, its surroundings.

19. Whilst the Council refer to Historic England's "standing advice" favouring timber window frames, this is simply general guidance rather than an absolute requirement. In this respect, I am cognisant of Historic England's recognition of the role that alternatives to timber frames can also have in complementing the character of farm buildings.

20. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposed development would preserve the character and appearance of the Snarestone Conservation Area and would not be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework or to Policy He1 of the North West Leicestershire Local Plan (2021), which together amongst other things, protect local character.

Conditions

21. I have considered the conditions suggested by the Council against the tests set out in Paragraph 56 of the Framework. A condition specifying the approved plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

22. A condition controlling finish of the external surface is necessary in the interests of local character. A condition controlling the detailed appearance of the windows and doors is necessary in the interests of local character.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above, the appeal is successful.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR