



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 27 September 2022

by L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 November 2022

Appeal A Ref: APP/Y0435/W/21/3283810

Finch Barn, Stoke Goldington Road, Ravenstone MK46 5AU

- 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 R James against the decision of Milton Keynes Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00729/FUL, dated 5 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/Y0435/Y/21/3283812

Finch Barn, Stoke Goldington Road, Ravenstone MK46 5AU

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr R James against the decision of Milton Keynes Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00730/LBC, dated 17 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2021.
 - The works proposed are single storey extension.
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Appeal C Ref: APP/Y0435/W/22/3298864

Finch Barn, Stoke Goldington Road, Ravenstone MK46 5AU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission
 - The appeal is made by Mr Richard James against Milton Keynes Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00661/FUL, is dated 16 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of a single storey extension.
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Appeal D Ref: APP/Y0435/Y/22/3298865

Finch Barn, Stoke Goldington Road, Ravenstone MK46 5AU

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Richard James against Milton Keynes Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00721/LBC is dated 16 March 2022.
The works proposed are erection of a single storey extension.
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Decision - Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Decision - Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Decision - Appeal C

3. The appeal is dismissed and planning permission is refused.

Decision - Appeal D

4. The appeal is dismissed and listed building consent is refused.

Background, Preliminary Matters and Main Issues

5. The listing description for the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse, notes a farmhouse and an associated stable range. The appeal property (Finch Barn) is a dwelling which forms part of a larger converted barn. It, together with another converted barn (collectively referred to hereafter as the converted barns) and a large, detached farmhouse once formed part of Yew Tree Farm. It is not disputed that the stable range referred to in the listing description is now the converted barns. However, for the avoidance of doubt, when referring to the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse, I am referring to both the farmhouse and the converted barns unless explicitly indicated otherwise.
6. I have noted the request and associated evidence, seeking a determination as to whether or not Finch Barn is curtilage listed. However, my role is to determine the appeals before me on their merits on the basis of the development / works applied for. For the reasons that follow, it has not been necessary for me to make such a determination. This is because, even if I were to accept Finch Barn was not a listed building, I would still have dismissed Appeals A and C. I am satisfied that no party has been prejudiced by my approach.
7. There are two schemes before me each with associated appeals under different but complimentary legislation. Appeals A and B (scheme one) and Appeals C and D (scheme two). Both schemes propose to extend Finch Barn in the same location, with extensions roughly the same size, but with different detailing. I have therefore dealt with all four appeals together except where I have indicated otherwise.
8. Appeals C and D result from the Council's failure to give notice of its decisions on both applications within the prescribed periods. However, the Council resolved that had it been in a position to determine the applications, it would have refused them for the same reasons as indicated in Appeals A and B.
9. Against this background, the main issue in all four appeals is whether the proposed development / works would preserve the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Ravenstone Conservation Area.

Reasons

10. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) requires special regard to be given to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting and any features of architectural or historic interest it possesses. The same act also requires special attention to be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a conservation area. Furthermore, paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that when considering the impact of new development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation.

Significance of the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse

11. The grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse is positioned on a narrow rural lane on the edge of the village, opposite agricultural buildings and surrounded by countryside. It is C17, with C18 and C19 additions and comprises a substantial two storey, detached dwelling and single storey stables / barns (the converted barns). All buildings are mainly constructed from coursed rubblestone. The roof of the farmhouse is part thatched, with the remainder and the converted barns roofed with a mix of slate and tiles. The farmhouse has sash windows with brick surrounds, brick chimneys and other attractive traditional architectural features, whereas the converted barns display much more basic architectural details typical of traditional farm buildings which are interspersed with modern windows and doors arising from their conversion.
12. However, although separated from the farmhouse by a boundary wall the converted barns retain their simple agricultural form. They are clearly identifiable as former agricultural buildings by being mainly single storey with narrow elongated footprints and simple architectural detailing. The converted barn next to the farmhouse, which includes Finch Barn has a noticeable U-shaped footprint, which even though separated by boundary walling and part in use as domestic gardens, leaves a large mainly undeveloped space between it and the farmhouse.
13. Thus, through their juxtaposition, common materials but conflicting scale and form there is a noticeable physical relationship between the farmhouse and the converted barns with the converted barns having a noticeable subsidiary character to the farmhouse. This is particularly evident from Stoke Goldington Road opposite the farmhouse and from the land to the north-west of Finch Barn and illustrates that the farmhouse and converted barns were originally part of the same village farm.
14. All that said, irrespective of whether or not the appeal property can be regarded as curtilage listed by its association with the farmhouse, insofar as is relevant to these appeals, it is apparent that the significance of the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse derives from the traditional architectural detailing of the farmhouse and the noticeable relationship between the farmhouse and the converted barns as part of a historical farmstead located on the edge of a village.

Significance of Ravenstone Conservation Area

15. The Ravenstone Conservation Area (CA) covers the majority of the built-up part of a rural village which mainly comprises dwellings of a variety of sizes and farmsteads arranged informally along Common Street and side roads. The buildings are mainly traditional, finished in local stone, with some thatch and display a variety of traditional architectural details. Space between buildings, open space alongside a brook, and views into side roads, give the CA an overall spacious quality which allows the countryside setting of the village to be appreciated from many locations within the CA.
16. Thus, insofar as is relevant to these appeals, I find the significance of the CA is founded on the variety and quality of the traditional architecture, the positioning and layout of the built form in the surrounding countryside and the historical relationship of the settlement with agriculture.

Effects on the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse and the CA

17. The Council have not raised any concerns with regard to either scheme one or two involving damage to or loss of historic fabric associated with a listed building. Whilst new openings would be required for both schemes, those openings would be relatively small with sections of the existing walls already rebuilt and the roof of the relevant part of the building to be altered covered with modern clay tiles. I also find no harm associated with damage to or the loss of any historic fabric associated with either scheme one or two.
18. I accept the proposed extension would be finished in high quality matching traditional materials. I acknowledge that Finch Barn and the other converted barns have a variety of domestic features and from the point of access appear as a small residential cul-de-sac of dwellings each with their own domestic curtilage separate from the farmhouse.
19. I also accept that Finch Barn and the other dwellings which comprise the converted barns do not have their own separate listing descriptions. I note that the form of any barns or buildings associated with farming can change over time and I have noted the example of a multi-phase barn complex at Eagle Farm, Milton Keynes. I have also considered the extract of the 1882 map which shows a structure in a similar location to the extension proposed in both schemes. However, the example given is not in the same context as the appeal proposals and whilst the full details of the structure shown on the historical map are not before me, I note it did not extend as far into the space behind the north-west elevation of Finch Barn as proposed in both appeal schemes.
20. The schemes before me would both create a new T-shaped end to one of the converted barns which would lead to an expansive south-west facing elevation next to the farmhouse. There would be glimpsed views of both schemes from Stoke Goldington Road standing opposite the farmhouse and clear views from the space between the farmhouse and the road. The schemes would also be clearly visible alongside the farmhouse when viewed from the land to the north-west of the appeal property.
21. Schemes one and two would noticeably extend the original footprint of the U-shaped converted barn and would appear uncharacteristically set into the hillside with the surrounding land retained. The proposed expansive south-west facing elevation in both schemes would limit views of and draw attention

away from the original U-shape traditional stable form of the converted barn and would appear noticeably at odds with the winding linear layout of the converted barns.

22. Therefore, even though I accept both schemes would involve modest extensions, I find schemes one and two would both introduce an incongruous feature into the historical farmstead which would be widely visible alongside the farmhouse and the converted barns. That feature would further domesticate the appearance of the converted barns and detract from the traditional architectural layout and character of the farmhouse and converted barns. In contrast with the appeal decision¹ quoted, these effects would harm the historical agricultural relationship between these buildings and cause harm to the setting and significance of the farmhouse and the significance of the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse. This harm would arise, irrespective of whether the appeal property is curtilage listed or not.
23. As an incongruous feature within the CA, which I have found would be harmful to the significance of a historical farmstead and traditional buildings within the CA, it follows that both schemes would also fail to preserve the character, appearance and significance of the CA as a whole.
24. In reaching these conclusions, I have noted the differences between schemes one and two. I acknowledge the attempt to address the Council's concerns in scheme two. I note scheme two would have a link section which is slightly lower in height than the rest of the proposed extension and would be finished in timber. However, the harm I have identified, arising from both schemes, relates to the size and position of the proposed extensions in relation to the appeal building and the adjacent farmhouse which are roughly the same for both schemes. Consequently, notwithstanding the minor differences in detail the effects with regard to the main issue are the same for both schemes.

Planning and Heritage Balance

25. For both schemes, the combined harm I have identified to the significance of the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse and the CA would be less than substantial. In which case paragraph 202 of the Framework requires it to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposals, including where appropriate, securing optimum viable use.
26. Both proposals would improve the living conditions for the occupiers in terms of additional and reconfigured internal living space. However, there is no substantive evidence to suggest the appeal property is not suitable for occupation, family life or homeworking. In these cases, any improvement arising from the proposals with regard to these matters are private benefits. Even if I accepted them as public benefits, they would be insufficient to outweigh the great weight I must attach to the harm I have identified to the designated heritage assets.
27. In reaching my conclusions on all four appeals I have also noted the comments about the Council's handling of the planning applications, associated consultee responses and pre application advice. However, I confirm I have determined the appeals on their planning merits only.

¹ Appeal Reference APP/H5390/V/21/3277137

28. Overall, I find the development / works proposed in all four appeals would therefore fail to preserve the grade II listed Yew Tree Farmhouse or its setting and any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the CA contrary to the respective sections of the Act and the Framework.
29. For the same reasons, all four appeal proposals would also be in conflict with the development plan, particularly Policy HE1 of the Milton Keynes Council Plan: MK 2016-2031 (2019) which, among other things, seeks to ensure proposals sustain and, where possible, enhance the significance of heritage assets.

Conclusion

30. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that Appeals A, B, C and D should be dismissed. Consequently, planning permission should also be refused for Appeal proposal C and listed building consent should also be refused for Appeal proposal D.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR