



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2023

by F Harrison BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W4705/W/22/3309638

Ravenscliffe Farm, Fagley Road, Bradford BD2 3QN

- 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 Ford against the decision of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01261/FUL, dated 18 March 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is alterations to existing agricultural outbuildings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I saw at my site visit that development is underway and is substantially complete. The overall proportions appear to accord with those shown on the submitted plans. However, the roof is yet to be constructed. As such, I have determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the development is inappropriate development in the Green Belt; and
 - the effect of the development on the setting of the listed building.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

4. Irrespective of the condition of the vegetation on the ground, the appeal site falls within land defined as Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in Section 13 identifies that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. It goes on to state that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and establishes that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate, subject to a number of exceptions. The exception at Paragraph 149 a) with regard to buildings for agriculture or forestry is relevant to this case.
5. I did not observe any livestock present during my site visit, or any activities commonly associated with agricultural use. Nonetheless, the appellant has set

out in their submissions that the appeal scheme is for agricultural purposes, and I have no compelling evidence to the contrary. Regardless of any annotations on the submitted plans, there is no clear evidence that the appellant does not intend to use the site for agricultural purposes.

6. The appeal scheme therefore falls within the exception at Paragraph 149 a) of the Framework in relation to buildings for agriculture or forestry. Accordingly, it is not inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and it follows that the proposal would not be harmful to the openness of the Green Belt or to the purposes of including land within it.

Listed Building

7. The appeal site is in close proximity to a Grade II listed building. As such, having regard to the duties imposed by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), I have assessed the appeal scheme against this heritage asset, having special regard to the desirability of preserving its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
8. The Grade II listed building known as Ravenscliffe Farmhouse and Adjoining Barn was built in the late 18th century. The building's significance derives from its special architectural and historic interest which includes its traditional design and appearance, as well as its relationship with the surrounding farmland. The statutory list description describes the materials used to include sandstone 'brick', flush external cornerstones known as 'quoins' and a stone slate roof. The setting of Ravenscliffe Farmhouse and Adjoining Barn includes the open land to the front, rear and side, including the subservient outbuildings within it, reflecting its agricultural origins.
9. The appeal scheme has an extensive footprint. Although of a single storey, it's bulk creates a prominent development, at odds with the farmhouse and barn, which are modest in scale. While it may be that original outbuildings at the site were constructed of breeze blocks and the continued use of this material was to match the existing materials, the continuous expanse of breeze blocks is unsympathetic to the sandstone-built farmhouse and barn, which have a more discrete and traditional appearance. Owing to the extensive width of the development, the full extent of which is highly visible and experienced in close proximity to the listed building, the appeal scheme detracts from the setting of the farmhouse and adjoining barn.
10. Consequently, the development does not preserve Ravenscliffe Farmhouse and Adjoining Barn's special architectural and historic interest. The harm that I have identified is 'less than substantial' harm. The Framework indicates that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, irrespective of the level of harm.
11. I observed the poor state of repair of some of the buildings, including the listed barn, and it may be that the appellant is trying to retain as many buildings as possible to secure a safe structure for the storing of livestock, however I do not have details of any of these wider restoration works as part of the appeal scheme. While the development would provide access to the side to allow machinery around the outbuilding, it has not been shown that the appeal scheme is the only way to achieve this aim. These matters are therefore of limited weight in the determination of the appeal.

12. The appellant has expressed frustrations with the Council's handling of the application with regard to discussions on alternative materials. However, this does not affect my consideration of the planning merits of the case. Moreover, while other materials and an alternative low pitched roof design are suggested as mitigation, clear details have not been provided as part of the appeal scheme before me, so I cannot be sure they would overcome my concerns.
13. Overall, there are no public benefits sufficient to weigh against the permanent harm that would arise to the significance of the listed building. For the reasons given, the development causes harm to the setting of the listed building, in conflict with Policy EN3 of the Local Plan for the Bradford District Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2017). This requires development to conserve and where appropriate enhance the heritage significance and setting of Bradford's heritage assets.
14. The appeal scheme is also contrary to the heritage protection policies of the Framework.

Conclusion

15. While I have not found the appeal scheme to be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, my above findings in relation to the effect of the proposal on the setting of the listed building bring the appeal scheme into conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. There are no material considerations that have been shown to have sufficient weight to warrant a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

F Harrison

INSPECTOR