



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by R Sabu BA(Hons), MA, BArch, PgDip, RIBA, ARB

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th May 2023

Appeal A Ref: APP/M2840/W/22/3299746

Top Farm, 10 High Street, Great Doddington, Northamptonshire NN29 7TQ

- 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 Cory Barlow against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NW/22/00087/FUL, dated 10 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is conversion of barns to form 3 bedroomed dwelling and annex complete with parking area and private garden.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/M2840/Y/22/3299748

Top Farm, 10 High Street, Great Doddington, Northamptonshire NN29 7TQ

- 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 Cory Barlow against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NW/22/00088/LBC, dated 10 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2022.
 - The works proposed are the conversion of barns to form 3 bedroomed dwelling and annex complete with parking area and private garden.
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Decision

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As I observed during my site visit, the scheme has been completed largely in line with the drawings. I have nevertheless assessed the scheme based on the submitted drawings.
3. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to listed buildings I have had special regard to sections 16(2), 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. The site and building benefits from planning permission and listed building consent for the conversion of barns to form 3 bedroomed dwelling and annex complete with parking area and private garden. The approved scheme included windows within the arched openings that were to be divided into two vertical panes and fully glazed. The primary difference between the approved scheme and that subject of these appeals is the brick infills and window design within the arched openings.
5. I note the evidence regarding issues in obtaining the materials that have been approved as part of the consented scheme and manufacturing limitations.

However, further details are not before me to demonstrate that the approved scheme could not be implemented should this appeal fail. Therefore, the approved scheme forms a fall-back position.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve Grade II listed buildings, Top Farm, 10, High Street (Top Farm) and Barn Approximately 50m North East of Number 10, High Street (Barn), and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that they possess and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Great Doddington Conservation Area.

Reasons

7. Top Farm lies at the north-eastern end of the Great Doddington Conservation Area (CA). While the area surrounding St Nicholas' Church and Manor would have formed the nucleus of the settlement, the historic core of the village is essentially linear running from Top Farm in the northeast to The Farm in the southwest. The Heritage Asset Survey (HAS) states that the parish was encompassed by an estate centred on Earls Barton during the late Saxon period. It also states that much of the land and associated properties within the village was owned by the Compton family, Earls and later Marquises of Northampton, from the late seventeenth-century.
8. The buildings along High Street are of a modest scale and traditional materials and massing and are generally arranged in a linear fashion along the road between a number of historic farms.
9. Given the above, I find that the significance of the CA, insofar as it relates to these appeals, to be primarily associated with the medieval origins of the settlement and the buildings of varying types and ages that reflect the development of the agricultural village between a number of farmsteads, including Top Farm, over a number of centuries.
10. The listing for Top Farm states that it has perhaps 14th century origins with datestones 1588, 1764 and 1888. However, the HAS states that, with respect to the first date, there is nothing within any of the surviving architectural detail externally or internally which can be reasonably assigned such a date. As such, it is considered that the farmhouse building dates from around 1764. The farmhouse part of the building is constructed in coursed limestone rubble.
11. The rear parts of the Top Farm farmstead that contained ancillary functions such as stables, stores and animal shelters date from 1880s with the majority of this phase constructed in brick.
12. The Barn is also constructed in coursed limestone rubble and dates from the mid-18th century. Given its large size, it is likely to have had a number of functions and appears to have originally had a thatched roof. The roof, re-built after the pitch was reduced, appears to date from the nineteenth-century.
13. The considerable expansion and remodelling of Top Farm and the Barn in the 1880s attest to the wealth of the Compton family and the retained importance of Top Farm in the village over a number of years.

14. Given the above, I find that the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to these appeals, to be primarily associated with the legibility and fabric of its 18th century origins and later 19th century phases as well as the agricultural character of the 19th century phase.
15. The works subject of the appeals include the infilling of the top part of the arched openings in the open-sided former animal shelter. The brick infills are recessed back from the arches. However, since they are a similar brick as the arches, the contrast between the arch and the top of the openings are reduced such that they diminish the prominence of the arched features, particularly when viewed from the highway.
16. The fall-back scheme includes glazing that would fill the entirety of the openings. As such, although the brick infills are in keeping with the materiality and detailing of the brick piers and other parts of the barn, the works have eroded the legibility of the arched openings to a greater degree than the approved scheme.
17. The works also include multi-pane rectangular windows (Crittall style windows) in the openings. The horizontal glazing bars are thinner than the frames that extend the full height of the openings. Notwithstanding this, the number and position of the glazing bars result in horizontal proportions of the glazing panes that are noticeable in a number of views. This aspect of the works has a residential appearance that has diminished the agricultural character of the wider building.
18. Therefore, the legibility of the 19th century phase of the building and its historic agricultural use and character has been eroded by the scheme. Accordingly, these works fail to preserve the special interest of the listed building. As the works are visible from the highway, the agrarian character of the CA has also been diminished.
19. The windows of the fall-back scheme have vertical proportions that are in keeping with the agricultural character of the building. As such, the works result in a greater harm to the special interest of the listed building compared with the fall-back position.
20. While I note the Crittall style windows on the host dwelling, since the dwelling has a residential character, it is not directly comparable to this scheme. I note the examples of Crittall style windows in other buildings including The Great Tew Estate. However, they generally appear to be of more square or vertical proportions or associated with dwellings rather than agricultural buildings. Therefore, they do not directly compare to the appeal scheme and have not altered my findings.
21. Given the above, I find that the scheme fails to preserve the special interest of the listed building and the significance of the CA.
22. Due to the limited scale of the proposal, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
23. Under such circumstances, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes the securing of optimal viable use of listed buildings.

24. I acknowledge the manufacturing limitations set out by the Appellant. However, even if the fall-back scheme could not be implemented, I cannot rule out the possibility that an alternative design could be found which would not harm the special interest of the listed building. Moreover, as the conversion of the barn to a dwelling appears to have been largely completed, it is unlikely that the building would fall into a state of disrepair should the appeal fail. In the absence of any substantiated evidence to the contrary neither would any public benefits accrue in relation to the CA.
25. Given the above, I conclude that, on balance, the scheme fails to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed buildings and the character or appearance of the CA. This fails to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 199 of the Framework and conflict with Policies 2 (a), (b) and (d) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 Adopted July 2016 that seeks, among other things, to conserve and, where possible, enhance the heritage significance of an asset or group of heritage assets in a manner commensurate to its significance. As a result, the scheme is not in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

26. For the above reasons and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

R Sabu

INSPECTOR