



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2023

by A.Graham BA(hons) MAued IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th October 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P1805/D/23/3325060

The Longbarn, Birchfield Road, Foxlydiate, Redditch, Worcestershire B97 6PX

- 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 & Mrs Frost against the decision of Bromsgrove District Council.
 - The application Ref: 23/00222/FUL dated 21 February 2023 was refused by notice dated 12 May 2023.
 - The application is for single storey detached 2 bay garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey detached 2 bay garage in accordance with application reference no. 23/00222/FUL dated 21 February 2023 subject to the conditions as set out in the Schedule below.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the determination of this application a revised National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) was published in early September 2023 whose main focus was not directly relevant to this appeal. Nevertheless, I have determined this appeal in accordance with the revised provisions within the Framework.

Main Issues

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area and upon the Non Designated Heritage Asset, The Longbarn.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a traditional vernacular building likely dating to around the mid/late 19th century and, along with its neighbour 'The Byre' forms a distinctive 'H' Plan form of former agricultural farm buildings. Nearby also is Foxlydiate Farm which would appear to have some historic relationship to these buildings and the complex exhibits a significant element of the area's agricultural past.
5. The Council have identified this building as a Non Designated Heritage Asset as per Paragraph 135 of the Framework. However, despite the Council having a

formal list of Locally Listed Historic Buildings, 'The Longbarn' has not been added to this Local List.

6. Although the Council may consider that there is some distinction between the Council's Local List and a Non Designated Heritage Asset, Paragraph 135 of The Framework essentially treats them as the same. As such, for the purposes of this appeal I shall too.
7. In assessing the significance of 'The Longbarn' therefore, I saw on my site visit that the complex obviously exhibits significant heritage values as both a complete and relatively intact complex of 19th century farm buildings. I consider it extremely likely that there was some historic relationship between 'The Longbarn' and 'The Byre' and the nearby Foxlydiat Farm which stands nearby. I also consider it possible that such a collection of farm buildings may have been related to a larger estate¹, such is their consistent quality.
8. The Longbarn itself maintains the essence of a traditional agricultural range not only in footprint and materials but also within its fenestration and sensitive joinery details that appear to have been maintained as timber. As such, the combination of both good survival, remaining details and aesthetic quality would lead me to concur that the building is worthy of identification as a Non Designated Heritage Asset.
9. The proposal before me seeks to create a covered garage area using a timber frame, traditional structure to be situated alongside the main Birchfield Road that runs past the site. In terms of the quality of construction, the new garage would contain a pitched roof with clay tile covering and be made of an oak frame using traditional pegged and morticed joints covered in featheredge cladding, so as to be heavily rooted within the vernacular tradition of timber frame buildings. The proposal would be sited at an unusual angle however in relation to the symmetry and uniform appearance of the barns and would not, as a result, conform to the overriding regular layout of the farmstead, nor would it perhaps be as sensitive an addition as those applications already approved².
10. In assessing this appeal, I give great weight to the significance and the need to preserve and enhance the setting and significance of the Non Designated Heritage Asset. This approach would reflect the requirements within the Council's High Quality Design SPD of the Local Plan that seeks to ensure the curtilage of historic farms are respected.
11. I consider that the principal issue here is not necessarily the quality of the proposed building, but rather its siting, being as it would be, at an angle to the rest of the complex. As mentioned above this would result in something of a departure from the overriding regular layout of the farm. However, in assessing the level of harm associated with this it is important to be aware of the evidence before me with regards previous historic structures upon this site as highlighted by an historic photograph supplied by the Appellant.³
12. In this image it is clear that buildings placed at such angles were not common, however neither were they uncommon and one such large structure is shown

¹ Entry from the Local Historic Environment Record (HER) alleges a potential connection in this respect.

² Planning permission 12/0185

³ Photograph included in the Appellant's Statement showing an aerial photograph from the late 1950's or 60's.

on this image standing to the front of the overall site at an oblique angle. Even though such buildings likely represented a later cumulative change the evidence is therefore present that they could often be part of the evolution of such sites.

13. Moreover, although the proposed garage would be located to the front of the plot, it would be very much more hidden from the road by well established tree cover. As such there would be little public view of the proposed building. Even were this foliage to be removed however, I do not consider that the proposed building would be so obvious from the streetscene so as to cause harm.
14. In assessing the potential harm upon the Non Designated Heritage Asset itself, I note that currently car parking takes place immediately to the front of 'The Longbarn' and this creates some element of clutter to the former farmyard. Indeed the historic photograph has shown this former farmyard to have been substantially enlarged in recent years. The proposal would likely house some of these vehicles within the new garage structure and as such I consider that there would be a mitigating impact through locating this building here. In terms of the proposed building domesticating the site, I consider that the timber structure would appear contextual to an agricultural setting and would, as noted above, reflect historic structures evidenced within the historic photograph.
15. In essence, although the proposed building would be at a rather unusual angle, this would not be sufficiently harmful to the Non Designated Heritage Asset so as to lead me to conclude that the scheme would be unacceptable. As such, I consider that the quality of the proposed garage and the mitigating impact of allowing cars to be removed from the immediate frontage of the barn, would enable the scheme to conform to Policies BDP1 BDP19 and BDP20 of the Bromsgrove District Plan as well as the guidance contained within the Bromsgrove District Councils High Quality Design SPD. Moreover, the scheme would conform with the requirements within The Framework seeking to manage effectively change within the historic environment.

Conditions

16. The application shall be approved subject to the standard conditions as well as two other conditions securing the quality of materials and the need to protect trees and hedges adjacent to the proposed building as suggested by the Council.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, and taking into account of all other matters raised, I allow the appeal subject to the conditions below.

A Graham

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- i) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- ii) Prior to their first installation, details of the form, colour and finish of the materials to be used externally on the walls and roofs shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local planning Authority. The development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- iii) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed Block Plan A02, Floor Plan A03, Elevations A04 and Garage Section 1:25 A06.
- iv) All trees and hedges to be retained within and adjacent to the site shall be protected in accordance with the requirements of BS5837:2012 during the course of all on site development works.