



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 October 2023

by K A Taylor MSC URP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19th December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/Y/23/3318045

The Granary, Northgate, Tickhill, Doncaster, South Yorkshire DN11 9HZ

- 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 Sewa Singh against the decision of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02550/LBC, dated 20 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 1 February 2023.
 - The works proposed are installation of black photovoltaic (solar) panels on south-facing roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal is in a conservation area and relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 16(2) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
3. I have also had regard in so far relevant, and in accordance with Paragraph 30 of the National Planning Policy Framework, 2023 (the Framework) in this appeal decision to the Tickhill Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2028, brought into force 24 July 2015, which the Council provided as part of their appeal submission.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the proposal would preserve a Grade II listed building, barn belonging to, and south east of number 31 and any of the features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses and the extent to which it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Tickhill Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a Grade II listed building, barn belonging to, and south east of number 31 and the building was listed in 1981 (Ref: 1314762) and dates from the 17th century or earlier. The building is identified in the listing as the former rear wing of No.29 (now demolished) and of being a timber frame, rubble and pantiled roof. It was probably built as a dwelling, but later becoming a barn.
6. The barn now links to a substantial sized modern two storey dwelling known as 'The Granary' since 2001 when the barn was extended with a link extension,

renovated, and roof replaced. The barn is constructed of random coursed rubble with renewed clay pantile roof. It forms the garage and original boarded doors have been replaced with modern garage doors, although adapted for its use there is some evidence of the historic elements and timbers remaining and it is recognisable as an outbuilding of traditional form and materials.

7. Given the above, I find that the special interest of the listed building, insofar as it relates to this appeal, to be primarily associated from its architectural and historic interest as a well-preserved example of a linear rectangular building with likely historic agricultural and residential use of traditional materials, including coursed limestone and the visible renewed red clay pantile roof which is characteristic to the area.
8. The Tickhill CA was designated in 1970 and encompasses the market town strongly influenced by the foundation of the Norman Castle and its medieval period. The main streets of the CA are lined with historic buildings with some more modern buildings integrating in the form of infill and back land development. It follows, therefore, that the appeal property, being an early 17th century property of historic and architectural interests, makes a significant positive contribution to the character and appearance of the CA.
9. The solar panels would be installed on the south-facing roof slopes of the former barn and its linked extension. There are existing rooflights and the solar panels would be sited above and in between these within a frame. Although they would be confined to the south elevation there would be some 16 panels in total with some 11 sited on the former barn. The addition of the solar panels would clearly result in further stark additions and clutter on the roof. They would conceal and erode most of the roof space to the former barn and its vernacular detail, whilst spanning over the wider significance of the listed building in combination with the linked extension. As such, appearing as dominant and incongruous additions to the roof and along the south elevation.
10. The appellant has provided layouts of the solar arrays and technical details with components in a document¹. There are existing photographs of the roof, photographs from the wider area and an aerial image showing the array superimposed upon. However, I consider details of the scheme are limited, other than the extent of technical inputs, outputs and loads and there is no finer detail showing the extent of the frame size, fixings or exact positioning of the frame on the roof itself.
11. The technical evidence seems to suggest there would be a significant amount of roof hooks and screws. Thus, it is not clear to the extent all these would be fixed to the frames and the frames positioned on the roofs, which would mean it is not necessarily reversible to the renewed roof. Furthermore, in the appellant's evidence it states that quotation details have expired, and new quotes would be required, due to panel technology constantly being improved they would install the most efficient black photovoltaic panels available as and when if approval was obtained. The Council have acknowledged that technical details can be altered provided the panels were a dark frame.
12. Nevertheless, the extent of works to be carried out to the roof to facilitate the panels is limited, and I cannot be certain without substantiated evidence that it would not result in permanent or ongoing damage to roof and the historic

¹ French Electrical Renewable, Project Name 12th October 2022

fabric of the barn for all the component parts. Moreover, there is a degree of permanence given that the solar arrays would likely be in position for several years, and there is nothing before me which demonstrates how the proposed installation in this case has been informed by guidance published by Historic England.

13. The appellant has suggested that the proposal would not harm the listed building because it would not be more widely visible. However, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest irrespective of whether or not public views of the building can be gained.
14. Given the above, I find that the proposal would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the listed building. This listed building is an important element in the CA and a positive contributor to its character and appearance. It must follow that if the listed building would be harmed by the proposal, then there would be a similarly harmful impact on the character and the appearance, and significance of the CA. Moreover, as I saw the proposal would be clearly discernible in those views from gaps between properties on Northgate when looking across on either side of this road, in the public realm and the CA which the former barn is sited within. Consequently, I give this harm considerable importance and weight in the planning balance of the appeal.
15. Paragraph 199 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Paragraph 200 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through the alteration or destruction of those assets and that any such harm should have a clear and convincing justification. Given the scale of works to the listed building, I find the harm to be less than substantial in this instance but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight.
16. Where a proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, paragraph 202 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including, where appropriate, securing its [the asset's] optimal viable use.
17. The appellant is of the opinion that the proposal would be beneficial because it would contribute to minimising fossil fuel and protect the environment from greenhouse gases and would feed into the grid. I note that the technical evidence details provide a disclaimer and that the model is based on only assumptions. The evidence appears to me to provide an expected generation output of some 3382 kWh per year, and including that costs would be expected to be recouped after 10 years. Nevertheless, I agree that any reduction in the carbon footprint of the dwelling would represent a public benefit that attracts considerable weight.
18. The weight I give to this is however lessened by a lack of evidence, including whether the less harmful alternatives suggested have been fully considered would have less harm upon the barn's significance and may still deliver these benefits of minimising fossil fuel. As I saw, the appeal property is a substantial sized dwelling in a generous sized plot rather than being limited. Moreover, Policy 36c of the Doncaster Local Plan 2015-2035, 2021 (DLP), states that measures for improving the energy efficiency of listed buildings will be supported where they do not conflict with its special interest.

19. Therefore, these public benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the harm that I have identified. In the absence of any substantiated evidence to the contrary neither would any public benefits accrue in relation to the CA. In addition, the continued viable use of the appeal property as a residential dwelling is not dependent on the proposal as the listed building has an ongoing residential use that would not cease in its absence.
20. Given the above and in the absence of any defined significant public benefit, I conclude that, on balance, the proposal would fail to preserve the special historic interest of the Grade II listed building and the character or appearance of the Tickhill CA would be neither conserved nor enhanced. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraphs 199 and 200 of the Framework and conflict with Policy 36a and 36b of the DLP, and Policy HE1 of the NP. Taken together the policies, amongst other matters, do not support proposals that harm the significance of a listed building or its setting other than in circumstances where that harm is clearly not outweighed by public benefits; alterations and extension will only be acceptable where they are sympathetic, use materials that complement, and preserve and enhance its special interest.

Other Matters

21. I have been referred to other appeal decisions², however I have not been provided with the precise details of these schemes and cannot be certain they are comparable. In any event, I have considered the works based on the evidence before me and my own site observations.
22. The lack of objections by consultations and neighbours is a neutral matter that weighs neither for nor against a proposal.
23. The appellant suggests that there is a variation in planning policy to the installation of photovoltaic panels on listed buildings across the country. Reference has also been made to listed buildings in Kensington and Chelsea. Nevertheless, there is a clear statutory duty placed on such works to listed buildings by the Act, and the Framework sets out national planning policy.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised I conclude that the appeal should fail.

KA Taylor

INSPECTOR

² East View, High Street & APP/W0530/Y/19/3230068