



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 November 2023 by Max Webb BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

Decision by L McKay MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/D/23/3327841

Greenacres Farm, 23 Scotland Hill, Sandhurst, Bracknell Forest GU47 8JR

- 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 Mrs Carolyn Stanley against the decision of Bracknell Forest Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00931/FUL/RFULZ, dated 11 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2023.
 - The development is described as, "Retrospective application for outbuilding to side garden of Listed Building. Application is the same as 22/00736/LB".
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an outbuilding at Greenacres Farm, 23 Scotland Hill, Sandhurst, Bracknell Forest GU47 8JR in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/00931/FUL/RFULZ, dated 14 November 2022, subject to the following condition:

- 1) Unless within 6 months of the date of this decision a scheme for the installation of vents serving the void below the structure, is submitted in writing to the local planning authority for approval, and unless the approved scheme is implemented within 3 months of the local planning authority's approval, the use of the outbuilding shall cease and all equipment and materials brought onto the land for the purposes of such use shall be removed until such time as a scheme is approved and implemented.

If no scheme in accordance with this condition is approved within 12 months of the date of this decision, the use of the outbuilding shall cease and all equipment and materials brought onto the land for the purposes of such use shall be removed until such time as a scheme approved by the local planning authority is implemented.

Upon implementation of the approved scheme specified in this condition, that scheme shall thereafter be retained.

In the event of a legal challenge to this decision, or to a decision made pursuant to the procedure set out in this condition, the operation of the time limits specified in this condition will be suspended until that legal challenge has been finally determined.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Application for costs

3. An application for costs was made by Mrs Carolyn Stanley against Bracknell Forest Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matters

4. The Government published on 19 December 2023 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework). Whilst I have had regard to the revised national policy as a material consideration, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.
5. The original planning application was made retrospectively. The building on site accords with the submitted plans, and I have considered the appeal on that basis.
6. I have amended the description of development in the decision above to remove words that do not refer to acts of development.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the setting and significance of the grade II listed Greenacres Farm.

Reasons for the Recommendation

8. The appeal site is in the garden of the listed building, screened from the street on one side by a large boundary hedge. The listed building derives considerable significance from its age and traditional farmhouse appearance, including its architectural detailing, exposed timber frame and white render. The immediate garden to the front of the property is attractive and well kept, allowing views of the front elevation. Indeed, it is mainly the front of the property that contains the key architectural features that distinguish this building's character. More recent extensions to the side, although finished in white, do not include the traditional architectural features and therefore contribute less to the significance of the listed building than the older parts.
9. Historically a farmhouse, the historic maps provided show that the building originally sat within a large plot with many trees and several outbuildings, surrounded by fields and sporadic other development. It is now closely surrounded by residential development and a church, within a built-up area. The listed building is therefore now experienced in a predominantly residential area and from a close distance. It is seen within an enclosed, typically residential garden. Its setting is therefore limited to the garden and close views from Crofter's Close, and is far less spacious than it would have been in the past. Consequently, the setting of the former farmhouse makes a limited contribution to its significance.
10. The development is set at a raised level, but it is still lower in height than the host dwelling. It is relatively small in relation to the plot as a whole and set

back from the front elevation of the dwelling and set off to the side. Outbuildings of this scale are commonly seen in the gardens of residential properties. As a result, it is an appropriate scale for the site, remains subordinate to the original dwelling and does not harm its character or appearance.

11. The design and materials used are modern and clearly indicate that the development is an outbuilding. This, combined with its positioning to the side of the dwelling, ensure it appears as a separate and distinguishable addition. The timber cladding is currently quite bright in colour, however this will weather down over time, reducing the visual impact of the building. Indeed, I saw that it was already more subdued in colour at the time of my visit compared to the Council's photograph from a site visit some time before mine.
12. From Crofters Close, the focal point remains the listed building, due to its scale and architectural interest. Consequently, the outbuilding does not unreasonably draw attention away from the significance of the listed building or become a focal point of the site. Nor does it detract from views of the significant elements of the listed building. Accordingly, it does not harmfully alter the way in which the listed building is experienced, and therefore preserves its setting and the features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
13. If the hedgerow to the side of the appeal site were to be removed, which is not the appellant's intention, it would allow additional views of both the listed building and the outbuilding. Views into the site from the front would also increase slightly, but for the reasons outlined previously, the outbuilding would not inadvertently detract attention from the listed building from that perspective. From Scotland Hill, the outbuilding would be significantly be more visible, but views towards the listed building would predominantly be of the more recent extensions to the property. Therefore, having an outbuilding interrupt part of these views would not erode the elements which contribute positively to the significance of the listed building. Consequently, there is no need to require the hedge to be retained in perpetuity.
14. Accordingly, overall, the development does not harm the character or appearance of the host dwelling and it preserves the setting and significance of the listed building. It therefore accords with Policy CS7 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 2008), which requires high quality design that respects the historic environment. It also complies with Saved Policy EN20 of the Bracknell Forest Borough Local Plan (adopted 2002), which requires regard to be had to whether development would be in sympathy with the appearance and character of the local environment and appropriate in scale, design, materials and siting.
15. Furthermore, the development conforms with the Framework, which attributes great weight to the conservation of heritage assets. It likewise follows the aims of the Bracknell Forest Character Area Assessments Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2010) and Bracknell Forest Council Design Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2017). Together, these documents explain the existing character of the area and that this should be preserved, including that outbuildings should be set back from the building line of the original house, be subordinate to the original house and either follow the style of the original building or complement it with a high-quality modern addition.

Conditions

16. The Council has suggested the standard time limit and plans conditions should be applied. The Highway Authority has recommended a condition that would require the delivery and installation of the outbuilding to be undertaken from Crofters Close and not Scotland Hill. However, as the development is already in place, these conditions are not necessary.
17. The small scale of the outbuilding means it would be highly unlikely to be used for any other use beyond that which is ancillary to the main dwelling. In any case, the development before me is an outbuilding and the change of use to a separate dwelling would require further permission. There would be no additional harm if it were to be used as ancillary habitable accommodation compared to the current home office use, and I do not therefore consider it necessary to recommend a condition that the outbuilding not be used as habitable accommodation.
18. The Council and appellant have suggested a condition could be used to secure a darker finish to the outbuilding. As I do not consider that the existing lighter material causes harm, I have not recommended including this condition as it would not be necessary.
19. A condition to ensure installation of vents below the outbuilding is necessary to protect trees in proximity to the outbuilding which make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The Council has suggested wording for this condition, including timescales for compliance, which the appellant has not disputed. I have imposed the condition and adapted the wording as necessary to ensure that the required details are submitted, approved and implemented so as to make the development acceptable in planning terms. There is a strict timetable for compliance because permission is being granted retrospectively, and it is not possible to use a negatively worded condition to secure the approval and implementation of the outstanding matter before the development takes place. The condition will ensure that the development can be enforced against if the requirements are not met.

Conclusion and Recommendation

20. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed subject to the above condition.

Max Webb

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

21. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's recommendation and agree with the reasoning and conclusion set out above. On that basis the appeal is allowed subject to the condition listed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR