



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 26 March 2025

by J Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert(Urb) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 May 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/P1133/W/25/3359201

The Granary, Colston Road, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0LW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Dr Garry Burdett against the decision of Teignbridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01415/FUL.
 - The development proposed is solar PV panels to south facing roof of house and west facing outbuilding.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/P1133/Y/25/3359200

The Granary, Colston Road, Buckfastleigh, Devon TQ11 0LW

- The appeal is made under section 20 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 against a refusal to grant listed building consent.
 - The appeal is made by Dr Garry Burdett against the decision of Teignbridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01416/LBC.
 - The development proposed is solar PV panels to south facing roof of house and west facing outbuilding.
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Decisions

1. Appeal A is dismissed. Appeal B is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. These decisions address both planning and listed building consent appeals for the same site but the same scheme. The remit of each regime is different but the main issues relate to both appeals. To reduce repetition and for the avoidance of doubt, I have dealt with both appeals together within a single decision latter.
3. The original development/works descriptions above referred to the building's curtilage listed building status, existing rooflight/skylight windows, previous roof reconstruction and the visibility of the development, when completed. However, such wording does not describe the proposed development/works and is omitted from the descriptions above. The descriptions above more simply and accurately describe the scheme and are those used by the Council.
4. The Granary is not formally listed by Historic England but main parties have agreed that it falls within the curtilage of Rill Farmhouse due to its physical proximity, clear historic subservience and shared ownership at the time of listing. There is no reason to differ from this view based on these considerations.

Main Issues- both appeals

5. The main issues are whether the development and works would (a) preserve the Grade II listed building, known as The Granary, or any feature or special architectural or historic interest it possesses and (b) harm the setting of Grade II

listed buildings, known as Rill Farmhouse, Pound House, three ranges of farm buildings west of Rill Farmhouse (Courtyard Steading) and Dove Barn.

Reasons

Heritage assets

6. The Granary is a single storey converted outbuilding, with a lower storey 'piggeries' projection to the front. Its main roof was re-constructed in the 1980s when its corrugated main roof was rebuilt and replaced with slate. The appellant's Heritage Assessment¹ (HA) indicates previously traditional South Devon 'Peggies' tiles may have been used. Within the roof of the main building and the nearest part of the projection, there are rooflights partly protruding above the roof plane and a stainless-steel flue pipe. A modern conservatory has further been built on the front of the principal part of the building. To the front of the building and the side of the projection, there is a courtyard enclosed by a wall, apart from an entranceway. A footway accesses the building from a steep winding lane. Other buildings, Rill Farmhouse, Pound House, ranges of farm buildings known as Courtyard Steading and Dove Barn lie nearby. These buildings form a distinctive building group on a wooded hillside.
7. The large Grade II listed farmhouse is T-shaped with wings either side of a main building. The RA indicates a mid-17th century date for the farmhouse. The statutory list entry (list entry number 1210017) indicates remodelling in 1790 (building date plaque), with 20th century alterations. It is constructed of local limestone rubble, with the 1790 phase rendered, and a slate roof. The roof is hipped at the left end and end of rear wing, and has chimney stacks with tall stone shafts. It is two storey with the main block being single depth and has an asymmetrical entrance front, projecting lateral stacks and a 1790s eaves cornice extending across this frontage. Fenestration consists of distinctive and prominent multi-paned timber sashed windows.
8. Such construction and features indicate a farmhouse of high status by the late 18th century which was likely to have had connections with local estates and families. The Rill Farm layout, with a series of courtyards dating from different construction phases, gives a formal feel to the farmhouse which is group listed with the other listed buildings. Pound House, Courtyard Steading and Dove Barn. The farmhouse, along with the Granary and these other listed buildings, are clearly marked on the circa 1840 Buckfastleigh Tithe Map.
9. The Pound House statutory list entry (list entry number 1209054) indicates a building of similar age (1848 and earlier) and roof construction to the other listed buildings around the farmhouse. The statutory list entry (list entry number 1209953) for Courtyard Steading indicates 3 ranges; a shippon (cattle shed) to the west, a bank barn with hayloft over shippon to the north and what is now a dairy at the south, probably originally a stable. For Dove Barn, the statutory list entry (list entry number 1210022) indicates the barn to have been in agricultural use, probably earlier than 1848, the date of the Courtyard Steading. All of these other listed buildings are similar constructed in terms of stone rubble comprising Devonian slate, volcanic stone from the north of the site, grey limestone, large river cobbles and some red sandstone. Roofs are clad in imported slate and there is

¹ Heritage Appraisal and Impact Assessment, The Granary, Rill Farm, Nils White Conservation, January 2025

evidence that the roofs were covered in local peg slates, almost certainly extracted from nearby quarries at Penn-Recca.

10. The farmhouse has grandiose qualities, which along with its local vernacular materials and traditional detailing, group value with surrounding buildings, are of great importance and contribute to the significance of this listed building. The other listed buildings, Pound House, Courtyard Steading and Dove Barn are subservient to the farmhouse. There have been changes of use of these buildings in the late 20th century, with Pound House being separated from the farm around 1999. Nevertheless, much of these building group's evolution is clearly legible, reflecting changing fortunes and their connections with the farmhouse. For these individual buildings, it is their group farmyard value, connection with the farmhouse, vernacular construction, traditional agrarian design, and age qualities which contribute to each building's significance.
11. The Granary, being curtilage listed, has less significance compared to the other listed buildings, including the farmhouse. It is though identified on the 1840s Tithe Map as part of the farm complex and as indicated by the HA, likely to have been in agricultural use, a stock shed with overhead hayloft. The slated roof area is unlikely to have been original, but it still retains an agrarian character and appearance by reason of its simplicity and use of natural material. It has been converted to residential use, with domestic alterations and conservatory not in keeping with its traditional agrarian character and appearance. Nevertheless, its historic subservience to the main farmhouse, similar vernacular construction with the other buildings in the complex, and simple traditional agrarian architecture are important qualities that contribute to the significance of this curtilage listed building.

Proposals

12. The proposal would result in the installation of ten solar panels on the main south facing roof of the building and seven solar panels on the projection in front (the former piggery). They would be coloured black. There are existing rooflights/skylights but the panels are greater in size, coverage and number, and cumulatively they would result in the expanse of slated roof area being reduced significantly. Such a change would greatly diminish the traditional roof extent that is an integral part of the building's agrarian appearance and character.
13. In distant views from the surrounding countryside, such as from Colston Road, Caddaford Lane, A384 and the South Devon Railway, there would be limited visibility. However, there would be views within the courtyard of the Granary and through the entrance into the courtyard where the full extent of the changes to the roofscape would be evident. Furthermore, listed buildings are safeguarded for their inherent architectural and historic interest, irrespective of whether or not public views can be gained. In this regard, paragraph 202 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource, so that they can be enjoyed for their contribution to the quality of life of existing and future generations. Such an alteration would harm the significance of the curtilage listed building, the Granary.
14. In relation to Rill Farmhouse, the altered Granary building would be sited adjacent, at a lower level and with vegetation, access and courtyard in between. Visibility would be limited between the curtilage listed building and this principal listed building, but the lack of visibility is not the sole determinant of listed building setting.

Here, the historic relationship between these listed buildings is of great importance. The unsympathetic extent and nature of the roof alterations would detract from the appreciation of this relationship, part of the farmhouse's architectural and historic significance, and would adversely affect its setting.

15. For Dove Barn, Pound House and Courtyard Steading, these listed buildings are part of the complex of buildings connected with the Rill Farmhouse. Similarly, visibility between these buildings and the Granary is limited and the historical relationship of these buildings is greater with Farmhouse as it is main principal building within the complex. Nevertheless, in a smaller way, the unsympathetic extent and nature of the roof alterations would still detract from the appreciation of the architectural and historic qualities of these listed buildings and their significance.
16. For the reasons indicated above, less than substantial harm, as set out in the Framework, would occur but this type of harm would vary in scale. It would be moderate for the Granary by reason of the adverse physical alteration, small for Rill Farmhouse by reason of the adverse effect on setting and minor for Pound House, Courtyard Steading and Dove Barn by reason of the adverse effect on setting.
17. There is a proposal for a solar farm along the River Dart and straddling the A384. The scheme before me is of a much smaller nature but the proposed development and works before me are different relating to heritage assets, in close proximity, where physical alteration to a listed building and settings are occurring. This illustrates that every proposal has to be considered on its particular merits. Additionally, there is no information of whether the solar farm has been granted favourably and even if it had, there is no certainty that this different scheme would proceed. For all these reasons, the consideration of a possible forthcoming solar farm only attracts limited weight.

Heritage and Planning Balance

18. Paragraph 215 of the Framework states where a development proposal will lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
19. In considering whether to grant planning permission, s66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservations Areas) Act (the Act) 1990 requires decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a listed building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. There would be harm (less than Substantial) to the significance of the Granary, Rill Farmhouse, Dove Barn, Pound House and Courtyard Steading. In terms of a scale, this less than substantial harm would be vary, but even at a minor level, this type of harm attracts considerable weight within a heritage balance.
20. The scheme would reduce greenhouse emissions compared to the existing situation and would contribute to reducing the impact of climate change. Framework paragraph 167 indicates significant weight should be given to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic (through the installation of heat pumps and solar panels). The appeal scheme's installation is part of a county wide project to install greater numbers of solar panels.

21. However, no detailed justification has been provided for the number of panels, whether there are less intrusive siting options and alternative renewable energy provision options, such as air source heat pumps, full or part provision in free standing locations near the site and consideration of panel installation on non-main building parts of the heritage asset. There are operational problems with east facing panels but the area within the control of the appellant is extensive. Common Dormouse have been identified within the area but in the absence of any evidence, it is unclear whether the removal of vegetation, whether it be hazel or apples trees here would remove attractive habitat for this species. Consequently, the weight to be attached to this public benefit would be small in this instance. In light of the forgoing, the public benefit would not be sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm identified, and the considerable importance and weight this carries in the heritage balances, for each adversely affected asset.
22. In summary, there would be harm to heritage assets in conflict with Policy EN5 of the Teignbridge Local Plan 2013-2033 which amongst other matters, states, to protect and enhance the area's heritage, consideration of development proposals will take account of the significance, character, setting and local distinctiveness of any affected heritage asset. By reason of this heritage harms, there would be conflict with the development plan taken as whole. There would be conflict with s66(1) and s16(2) of the Act. There would be no material considerations that indicate that the planning appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, Appeals A and B should be dismissed.

J Parsons

INSPECTOR