
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2025

by R E Jones BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J1860/D/25/3358547

Cherry Tree Barn, 1 Naunton Farm Barns, Holt Heath, Worcestershire WR6 6NG

- 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 Mr and Mrs David Darby against the decision of Malvern Hills District Council.
 - The application Ref is M/24/00748/HP.
 - The development proposed is described as: 'Replacement of originally fitted timber framed doors and windows with brown wood grain foil faced UPVC framed equivalents'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appellant considers that the barn should not be considered to be part of the listed building (Naunton Farmhouse) having regard to s.1(5) of the Act and relevant caselaw. That may or may not be the case, and I refer to the matter further below, but even if the appellant is correct in that assertion, the proposal certainly affects the setting of that listed building. As such, I need to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses in accordance with section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) (the Act).
3. The application form confirms that the development has been completed, and I was able to see this during my site visit. I have determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve the setting of the nearby grade II listed building, Naunton Farmhouse.

Reasons

Special interest and significance

5. Cherry Tree Barn is a two-storey dwelling, and one of several former agricultural barns that form a courtyard facing Naunton Farmhouse, a grade II listed building.
6. The listed farmhouse comprises a late 18th century two storey building constructed of brick outer walls, a tiled roof, gable end parapets and brick-built chimneys stacks. The building's primary elevation faces the appeal site and the other courtyard buildings. It comprises three bays with the central bay slightly protruding

and consisting of an ornate arched timber-framed porch and a central pediment that rises above the eaves of the roof. All windows have cambered heads and include several tall sash windows.

7. Cherry Tree Barn and the other courtyard buildings have a simple utilitarian form. They vary in length and height but are largely consistent in terms of their brick facing elevations, clay roof tiles and brown window and door openings. Those openings, I observed during my site visit, were predominantly timber stained. The complex of buildings that make up the courtyard, although no longer in agricultural use, retain much of their original fabric, while alterations and additions to the buildings have largely been sympathetic and consistent with the traditional appearance and detailing of the originally built barns.
8. A boundary wall with fence above encloses the front garden of Naunton Farmhouse and separates it from Cherry Tree Barn and the other courtyard buildings to the south. From within the courtyard the farmhouse is observed as a taller building overlooking the courtyard. Its position on marginally higher ground has an imposing presence, while its more refined design contrasts with the utilitarian appearance of the former agricultural buildings.
9. The former courtyard buildings, including the appeal building, would likely have provided shelter for livestock, storage for crops and tools and spaces for processing (e.g. milking and threshing). The courtyard formation would have allowed for an organised arrangement of the various farming activities and efficient movement between the buildings and the nearby farmhouse. The courtyard space would also have allowed for labour coordination, supervision of e.g. crops and livestock and movement between the barns. This space, although now used in part in connection with the converted barns for parking and turning, still retains an open and undeveloped character from where the historical and functional connection, between the courtyard barns and Naunton Farmhouse can be appreciated.
10. Through the domestication and sub-division of buildings on the former Naunton Farm complex it is evident that agricultural activities no longer take place within the buildings or the courtyard area. Nonetheless, the noticeable proximity and orientation of Cherry Tree Barn and the other courtyard buildings to the listed Naunton Farmhouse would have been purposefully designed to allow for the operations of the farm to be overseen and managed effectively.
11. From the evidence before me, the special interest and significance of Naunton Farmhouse are largely derived from its historic and architectural interest. Important contributors in these regards are its surviving historic fabric; imposing architectural style; traditional construction and materials; and its historic relationship with the adjacent courtyard buildings.
12. Pertinent to the appeal, the building's special interest and significance also stems, in part, from its setting. Its immediate setting, comprising the courtyard barns, has historic, functional, physical and visual links with Naunton Farmhouse, as well as a coherent and legible architecture. The courtyard is an important space from where the listed farmhouse is experienced and contributes considerably to both its significance as an asset, as well as the ability to appreciate that significance.
13. It is accepted that the functional and physical association between the courtyard buildings and Naunton Farmhouse, and thus the associated setting of the listed building, has evolved and changed. Whilst the separation and development of

Cherry Tree Barn, as part of that courtyard has diminished, its historic and visual relationship with the listed farmhouse, nevertheless, remains. In this respect and notwithstanding its current appearance, the appeal site, as part of the listed asset's wider setting, contributes positively to its special interest and significance through its historic association and its coherent architecture and legible arrangement as part of a former agricultural farmstead. In this respect Cherry Tree Barn, as part of Naunton Farmhouse's wider setting, contributes positively to its special interest and significance.

Appeal Proposal and Effects

14. The specification of the former windows/doors is somewhat limited. Nonetheless the submitted photographs show some of the former timber framed windows. These were likely installed at the time Cherry Tree Barn was converted to a dwelling, in the late 20th century. I acknowledge that those former windows were unlikely to be original, however, from the images presented, they were of a suitable material, design and constructional technique that was likely authentic and characteristic of the period when the building was constructed.
15. There is no detailed specification or cross section of the proposed windows and doors now in situ. However, the submitted information confirms they are uPVC and double glazed. From the submitted photographs and my site visit I also observed that the windows and doors have aimed to imitate traditional timber windows and those in adjacent buildings, in a brown textured woodgrain appearance.
16. Furthermore, the frames of the new windows/doors have a much thicker profile, compared to the timber openings I saw on surrounding buildings, as well as the previous windows depicted on the submitted photographs. This heavier appearance was notable in the windows that had hinged openings or where they encase larger areas of glazing (e.g. doors). The frames of the windows and doors also had a shiny and unblemished appearance, reflecting their modern construction and material. In this respect the manufactured woodgrain effect lacks authenticity and the craftsmanship of traditionally constructed timber windows which age over time. Moreover, traditional timber windows have thinner frames and a more matt and uneven finish, as was noted in the other buildings facing the courtyard.
17. From the courtyard, upper floors of the listed farmhouse and the communal access drive leading to the site, I was able to clearly discern some of the uPVC windows and doors on the front and side elevations of the appeal building. From those perspectives the modern uPVC windows and doors appear as unauthentic and discordant additions to the appeal building. Their presence erodes the historic understanding and coherent architectural language of the courtyard and its historic association with the listed farmhouse. In doing so the proposal would harm the setting of Naunton Farmhouse, from which it derives some of its special interest and significance.
18. It is acknowledged that the appeal building, and the listed farmhouse would not be clearly seen from any publicly accessible areas. 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.
19. Even if the Council's Enforcement Officer indicates that the proposed windows and doors are indistinguishable from wood, this does not align with the views of the

Conservation Officer and the Planning Officer in the delegated report, or my detailed assessment of the case.

20. Drawing all of the above together, the placement of the windows and doors in the style proposed and observed on site would not preserve the setting of the nearby grade II listed, Naunton Farmhouse. On this basis, it would cause harm to the significance of that designated heritage asset.
21. The officers report indicates that a listed building consent application is required for the works that are the subject of this appeal, as Cherry Tree Barn, in their view is within the curtilage of the listed, Naunton Farmhouse. Listing includes any object or structure fixed to the building and any free-standing object or structure erected before 1 July 1948 within the curtilage of the listed building under section 1(5) of the Act. This applies irrespective of whether or not it has been explicitly identified in the list description
22. The appellants' evidence includes a detailed account of the site's planning history, together with case law which informs their view that the appeal building does not form part of the curtilage of the listed farmhouse.
23. In the absence of a listed building application and any subsequent S.20¹ appeal, my assessment has not focused on those arguments. Nonetheless, even if I were to agree with the appellants' that the appeal building was not within the curtilage of Naunton Farmhouse, and thus not listed, there is still a relationship that I can discern in so far as it relates to the setting of the listed asset, and upon which I have assessed this appeal.

Public benefits and heritage balance

24. Paragraph 212 of the National Planning Policy Framework, (the Framework) advises that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Paragraph 213 goes on to advise that significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and that this should have clear and convincing justification.
25. With reference to Paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given that the extent of the development, where I have found harm, would be relatively localised, I find the harm to the setting of the heritage asset to be 'less than substantial' and at the lower end of that spectrum, but nevertheless, of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, Paragraph 215 advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, which includes securing the asset's optimum viable use.
26. The replacement of the timber windows/doors with the current uPVC units, has led to, according to the appellant, a significant reduction in the consumption of oil and therefore energy use at the property. This has also reduced fossil fuel consumption, and the appellant therefore considers this a public benefit.
27. Although I do not have any thermal rating details to compare the previous and new windows/doors, it is plausible that, the thicker frames and glazing will have

¹ Section 20 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 - Right to appeal against decision or failure to take decision for an application for listed building consent..

improved the building's insulation. However, it would not be possible to attribute the reduction in energy consumption directly to the new window/doors as several variables could have accounted for this (e.g. improved insulation, or variations in weather conditions and temperatures). Additionally, there is no substantive evidence presented to suggest that the proposed uPVC windows and doors would significantly outperform well installed and maintained double glazed timber units. Therefore, I am unable to attribute this as a clear public benefit in the appeal's favour.

28. The above claimed benefits and the reduction in the building's energy costs have secured, in the appellant's view, the optimum viable use of the building. However, this could also be achieved through alternative windows and doors that would be more sympathetic to the historic character and aesthetic qualities of the building and the setting of the adjacent listed farmhouse.
29. The appellant considers that there would be environmental harm from disposing of the windows and doors and replacing them with timber equivalents from newly felled trees. On this basis keeping the units in situ would, it is claimed, be a public benefit. Notwithstanding the outcome of any subsequent action taken by the Council if the windows are removed, then sustainable solutions for upcycling or recycling would overcome the environmental harm suggested by the appellant, while timber is a sustainable material given that trees can be replanted. Accordingly, these arguments do not weigh in the appeals favour as public benefits.
30. It is acknowledged that the appellant has invested significant resources in repairing and refurbishing various parts of the property, including the installation of windows and doors. The general upkeep of the dwelling contributes to the improvement of the local housing stock and as such is a public benefit, albeit of minor weight in this case.
31. Overall, clear and convincing justification for the harm to the significance of the listed, Naunton Farmhouse has not been provided, while the minor weight I ascribe to the public benefits which accrue from the proposal is not sufficient to outweigh the considerable importance and weight that I attach to the harm I have found.
32. Therefore, I conclude that the proposal will not preserve the setting of the grade II listed, Naunton Farmhouse. This would conflict with the statutory presumption set out in sections 66(1) of the Act. It would also be contrary to Policies SWDP6, SWDP21 and SWDP24 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan 2016, in so far as it seeks to protect and enhance the District's historic environment; and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve or enhance the historic environment.

Other Matters

33. The appellant indicates that the Council approved the principle of uPVC windows at the appeal site through approval of earlier and subsequent consents relating to the attached double garage². However, and notwithstanding the detailed case presented that the appeal building is not within the curtilage of the listed farmhouse, the attached garage is a much later addition that does not form part of

² MH 95/0257/FUL and MH 95/0258/LBC; M/2301669/HP and M/23/01668/LB

the original courtyard complex, whilst the modest number of uPVC openings relating to that addition does not justify the wholesale replacement of the previous timber windows and doors relating to the original former barn.

34. I have had regard to the letters of support from neighbouring occupiers which consider the windows and doors to be acceptable, however these do not overcome my concerns.
35. The appellant indicates that flooding events at the property in recent years have led to time consuming and costly refurbishments, and any requirement to remove the windows and doors would cause further financial and emotional upheaval. Whilst I sympathise with the appellants having to endure those flood events, I must have regard to the provisions of the Act in assessing the effect of the proposal on the nearby listed building and any future action, following this appeal would be a matter for the Council.

Conclusion

36. The proposal would conflict with the development plan. There are no material considerations which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

RE Jones

INSPECTOR