



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 19 October 2020

by **S Edwards MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 December 2020

Appeal A Ref: APP/B9506/W/20/3255885

Bagnum Farm House, Bagnum Lane, Bagnum BH24 3BZ

- 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 Thomas against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 20/00117, dated 11 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is 'Proposed link extension connecting existing dwellinghouse to existing stable structure. Alterations to stable structure including formation of proposed door and window openings. Alterations to main dwellinghouse including enlarged opening at ground floor level to form connection to proposed link extension and minor internal re-modelling to increase the spatial efficiency of the kitchen area at ground floor level and bedroom area at first floor level'.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/B9506/Y/20/3255886

Bagnum Farm House, Bagnum Lane, Bagnum BH24 3BZ

- 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 Thomas against the decision of New Forest National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref 20/00118, dated 11 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 April 2020.
 - The works proposed are 'Proposed link extension connecting existing dwellinghouse to existing stable structure. Alterations to stable structure including formation of proposed door and window openings. Alterations to main dwellinghouse including enlarged opening at ground floor level to form connection to proposed link extension and minor internal re-modelling to increase the spatial efficiency of the kitchen area at ground floor level and bedroom area at first floor level'.
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Decisions

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

Preliminary Matters

3. The appeal scheme relates to a site comprising listed buildings, and I shall therefore have special regard to sections 16(2) and 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act).
4. Both appeals relate to the same site and raise similar issues, and I shall therefore consider them in a single document, in the interests of brevity.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:

- Whether the proposed development and works would preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed buildings known as Bagnum Farmhouse and Barn 20 metres North of Bagnum Farmhouse, and the curtilage listed stable block; and
- In respect of Appeal A, the effect of the development on the balance in the range and mix of housing stock available within the New Forest National Park.

Reasons

Heritage

6. Located within an area of rural character, the appellant's property is a handsome painted brick farmhouse with a plain tile roof, which dates from the mid-18th century. It was subject to a number of alterations and extensions during the 19th century and, more recently, a single storey addition which was completed in 2010. Bagnum Farmhouse retains much of its historic detailing, which includes a very symmetrical front elevation, with a central full height gabled porch flanked by ground and first floor casement windows, a three-light hipped dormer window and prominent gable chimney stacks. Internally, the historic layout of this domestic building appears to remain largely intact, thus making a valuable contribution to its significance as a designated heritage asset.
7. The appeal site also comprises a separately listed barn building dating from the late 18th century. The stable block, which is attached to the listed barn, was added subsequently during the 19th century. The stable block is classified as a curtilage listed building under Section 1(5) (b) of the Act, and its preservation therefore carries the same considerable importance and weight as the principal listed building.
8. Having regard to the detailed design and features of the barn and stable block, there is no doubt that these were constructed as functional and ancillary buildings associated with the farmhouse. Despite their size, these outbuildings, which are physically separate, hold a subservient relationship to the host property by reason of their simpler form and detailing, whilst making a positive contribution to the setting of the listed farmhouse. Given the above, I find that the significance of these designated heritage assets does not solely derive from their architectural merit, but also from their historic interest as an important example of a traditional farmstead characterised by its loose courtyard plan, set within an attractive landscape setting.
9. The appellant seeks to create a visual contrast between the traditional appearance of the historic structures and the assertive, contemporary design of the proposed link, which would be extensively glazed and include a flat roof. Although a modern design approach may in some instances be appropriate, the proposed extension would, rather than a discreet link, appear as a prominent addition to the historic fabric, particularly by reason of the size of the structure required to physically connect the stable building to the farmhouse.

10. This would lead to the loss of the physical space which presently exists between the domestic farmhouse and the agricultural buildings and would subsequently undermine their functional relationship. Despite the extensive areas of glazing which would characterise the proposed link, the desired effect would to a large extent be negated by the future use of the space as a dining area and the domestic paraphernalia associated with it. As a result, the appeal scheme would therefore inevitably erode the hierarchical importance of the farmhouse in relation to the existing outbuildings, which ought to be retained to preserve the significance of the designated heritage assets and their respective settings.
11. The internal and external alterations to the stable block, having particular regard to the vast expanses of glazing to the West elevation and clerestory windows to the East elevation would give it an overtly domestic appearance. These changes, together with the entire removal of the gable wall to accommodate the proposed link, would dilute its original character as a functional, agricultural building, to the detriment of its significance. In my view, this could not be satisfactorily addressed by the proposed timber shutters which would not screen the extent of the glazing at all times.
12. A number of internal changes are also proposed to the listed farmhouse. At first floor level, a wall would be removed to create a larger master bedroom with a dressing room and an en-suite bathroom. These works would not solely result in the loss of considerable historic fabric, but also compromise the plan form and layout of the building which, as noted above, form an important part of its significance. At ground floor level, one of the windows would be replaced with a larger opening to provide access to the glazed link. I share the concerns raised by the Authority regarding the width of the proposed access, particularly as limited information is before me to justify what would in effect lead to a further loss of historic fabric. In the absence of substantive evidence to the contrary, I find that these internal works would erode the special interest of the listed farmhouse, and have a harmful effect on its understanding and appreciation.
13. The proposed development and works would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of the listed farmhouse, barn and curtilage listed stable block, as well as their setting. The National Planning Policy Framework¹ (the Framework) clearly states that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets, irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance. In such circumstances, the identified harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use.
14. The stable block is in a relatively poor state of repair, and works to bring it back to viable use could reasonably be regarded as a public benefit. That said, whether or not the building needs to be repurposed to secure its long term future, any alterations or additions would nevertheless need to be undertaken in a manner which does not prejudice the significance of the heritage assets or their respective settings.
15. The appellant seeks to create additional living space and improve the living conditions for existing and future occupiers of the property. In the absence of

¹ Paragraph 193.

more detailed information in that regard, there are no reasons which lead me to believe that the continued occupation of the farmhouse is dependent on the proposed development and works. Given the above, the harm would not be outweighed by the limited public benefits which have been identified.

16. The proposed development and works would cause harm to the special architectural and historic interest of the Grade II listed farmhouse and barn, but also the curtilage listed stable block, including their setting. The appeal scheme would therefore fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, Policies SP16, SP17, DP2 and DP18 of the New Forest National Park Local Plan 2016-2036² (LP) and section 16 of the Framework. Amongst other things, these require development proposals to achieve the highest standards of design, whilst conserving or enhancing the significance of special interest of designated heritage assets. For these reasons, I also find that the proposal would conflict with one of the statutory purposes of the National Park, which is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the New Forest.

Housing stock

17. LP Policy DP36 sets out the circumstances in which extensions to existing dwellings will be permitted, to ensure that additions do not adversely affect the locally distinctive character of the built environment of the New Forest. In respect of dwellings with a total internal habitable floorspace exceeding 100 square metres outside one of the four defined villages, such as the appellant's property, the extension must not increase the floorspace by more than 30%. The supporting text indicates that for the purposes of this policy, existing dwelling means the dwelling as it existed on 1 July 1982, or as the dwelling was originally built or legally established, if the residential use occurred after that particular date.
18. There is no dispute that the accommodation within the roofspace of the farmhouse presently constitutes habitable floorspace. The issue is whether or not it was used as such on 1 July 1982, which in some cases, may require a matter of judgment. The Authority rely on the plans submitted as part of a Listed Building Consent application³ to notably erect stud walls at first and second floor levels to form a shower room and a bathroom, which show the existing area within the roof as 'attic' space. Accordingly, they have excluded the second floor level from their calculations and have concluded that the proposed scheme would exceed the 30% threshold permitted by Policy DP36.
19. The appellant has based his assessment on the assumption that the second floor level of the original dwelling was habitable space, and this area should therefore be included within the total internal habitable floorspace as it would have existed on 1 July 1982. This is notably substantiated by the appellant's submissions, which include census records from 1911 stating that there were nine rooms in this dwelling.
20. Furthermore, the size of the farmhouse would suggest that the roofspace would have in all likelihood been used as habitable space for family members, live-in labourers or servants. In my opinion, the building's historic fabric, having particular regard to the staircase and small dormer window to the front

² Adopted August 2019.

³ Reference 08/93058.

elevation, is a further indication that the second floor level was intended to be used as habitable space and was likely to have been used as such on 1 July 1982.

21. The Authority also consider that proposals for double height living rooms with glazing up to what would be the first floor level will be regarded as two additional floors. However, I have not been presented with any detailed policy or guidance to substantiate such an approach and, in any event, there is nothing on the proposed plans, including the glazing detailing, which would suggest that a mezzanine floor would be added subsequently.
22. For the reasons detailed above, I conclude on this issue that the appeal scheme would not lead to an increase in floorspace above that permitted by Policy DP11, and the proposal would not therefore have an adverse effect on the balance in the range and mix of housing stock available within the New Forest National Park.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that both appeals should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR