

# 19/00731/FUL

**Applicant** Mr & Mrs P.R. Smith

**Location** The Stables Hall Farm Chapel Lane Granby Nottinghamshire NG13 9PW

**Proposal** Removal of entrance door and addition of entrance lobby and detached kitchen extension.

**Ward** Thoroton

## THE SITE AND SURROUNDINGS

1. The application refers to a residential dwelling in the village of Granby. The property is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural barn, converted into a dwelling as part of a larger conversion scheme for three residential dwellings. The dwelling forms the north eastern wing of a three sided 'U' shaped range of buildings which face into the original central farm courtyard. Part of this courtyard now forms the property's amenity space and is laid to lawn and enclosed with fencing with substantial landscaping around the boundaries. The building is single storey and constructed from brick under a pantile roof.
2. The property is located off a private drive at the end of Chapel Lane, which leads to The Hall Farm. The south western, front elevation faces into the former courtyard and onto the property's garden area. The rear elevation lies directly on the boundary of the front garden area to Granby Hall, which lies to the north. A separate garage block serving all three converted dwellings has been built on the south eastern side of the site, partly enclosing the open arm of the courtyard.
3. The site lies within the designated Granby Conservation Area.

## DETAILS OF THE PROPOSAL

4. Planning permission is sought for the addition of an extension to the south western elevation of the property. The main body of extension would have a circular footprint and is designed to reflect an agricultural silo. It would be connected to the main dwelling through a flat roofed glazed 'lobby' section. In total the extension would project out from the existing building by 6.7 metres and would be 4.15 metres high. It would be clad in black, 'charred timber' vertical boarding with a metal standing seam roof.

## SITE HISTORY

5. 02/00182/FUL: Conversion of barns to form 3 dwellings and rebuilding of outbuilding to form garage. Granted 9/4/2002.

## REPRESENTATIONS

### Ward Councillor(s)

6. The Ward Councillor (Cllr Bailey) has no objection to the application, commenting that the use of the silo shape helps to preserve the character of the courtyard and is a reminder of its previous agricultural use.

### Town/Parish Council

7. No comments have been received.

### Statutory and Other Consultees

8. The Borough Council's Conservation & Design Officer noted the courtyard had become infilled with various lightweight modern agricultural structures prior to their conversion - but the design and access statement confirms these were removed "to reveal the original layout", one benefit of the conversion scheme which allowed the retained and converted buildings to once again provide a positive contribution to the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the conservation area.
9. The fact that the courtyard was previously infilled may at first thought represent some kind of justification for proposing extensions into the courtyard but it should be noted that even the previous infilling was harmful and its removal considered beneficial to the character and appearance of the conservation area. As such there is no precedent or justification to be had by looking back at harmful infilling removed in the past.
10. The application suffers from the difficulty that the property owns no land on the outside face of the courtyard where modest extensions could be more reasonably accommodated into the agricultural form of the site, it is also not possible to continue the length of the linear range as this area presumably forms part of the land across which other residents have access rights. Whilst the application references the approved scheme at 15/01466/FUL (previous extensions to the group of buildings) as having "helped with current proposals" the approach of that approved scheme involved extensions outside of the courtyard and continuing the linear run of the range - no extension was approved within the space enclosed by the 3 converted ranges and as such the 2015 approved scheme is in no way comparable with the application now submitted.
11. The former silo structures, which were themselves located outside of the courtyard, were not traditional nor attractive features of the site and would not have been considered to positively contribute to the character and appearance of the conservation area. Circular forms are not currently seen within the site and could be considered incongruous. There is a type of circular or semi-circular attachment found on barns and agricultural buildings - the horse engine, or "gin", shed. However, as with other ancillary additions to agricultural courtyards, they tend to feature on the outer face of the courtyard rather than projecting into the courtyard. The Officer is not aware of any surviving examples within the Borough, or even if this building type was ever particularly common here. Concerns are raised that by introducing a building of this form

in this position it could distort the character of the buildings by suggesting a form of structure which almost certainly never existed here.

12. Concerns are also raised in relation to the proposed materials. Timber cladding is not a common local building material in southern Nottinghamshire, it does have connotations in terms of agricultural buildings but very much rooted in the black boarded vernacular barns common in East-Anglia and the south east of England. On this site the backdrop is at least in part existing buildings of local orange/red brick, which is a comparatively light and contrasting backdrop against which the Officer considers a black building would stand out rather than blend in.
13. It is noted that former slit vents on the east side of the building would be unblocked and infilled with recessed glass. This was a part of the proposal, controlled via condition, on the original application and should have already been undertaken. The condition required the glazing to be obscured and fixed non-opening to protect privacy of neighbouring land to the east. It is not considered that something which was to have been undertaken as part of the conversion can now be held up as a benefit of the scheme, particularly when there would be nothing to prevent that work being undertaken in isolation under the extant permission.
14. The Officer objects to the proposal on the basis that it would be deemed harmful to the architectural and historic character of the converted agricultural complex, in turn diminishing its positive contribution to the special architectural and historic character and appearance of the conservation area. Given the size of the conservation area and that the harm arising would be limited to the far west end of Chapel Lane the harm would be less than substantial, but still significant.

### **Local Residents and the General Public**

15. No representations have been received.

### **PLANNING POLICY**

16. The Development Plan for Rushcliffe consists of The Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (referred to herein as 'core strategy') and the 5 saved policies of the Rushcliffe Borough Local Plan 1996.
17. The emerging Local Plan Part 2: Land and Planning Policies, which was subject to hearings in November and December 2018 as part of the examination in public, is also a material consideration. Paragraph 48 of the NPPF allows weight to be given to relevant policies in an emerging local plan. The extent of the weight that can be given to these policies is dependent on the stage of its preparation, the extent to which there are unresolved objections to relevant policies and the degree of consistency of the relevant policies to the NPPF. The plan is currently still under examination but on 7 February 2019 the Inspector appointed to examine the plan wrote to the Council to advise that they thought the plan is likely to be capable of being found legally compliant and sound, subject to main modifications. It can therefore be afforded some considerable weight subject to the relevant policies not being subject to relevant modifications and providing the relevant policies not being in conflict with the NPPF.

18. Other material considerations include the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019), the National Planning Practice Guidance (the Guidance), the Rushcliffe Borough Non Statutory Replacement Local Plan (NSRLP) (2006) and the Rushcliffe Residential Design Guide (2009).

### **Relevant National Planning Policies and Guidance**

19. The relevant national policy considerations for this proposal are those contained within the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the proposal should be considered within the context of a presumption in favour of sustainable development as a core principle of the NPPF. The proposal falls to be considered under section 12 of the NPPF (Achieving well-designed places) and it should be ensured that the development satisfies the criteria outlined under paragraph 127 of the NPPF. Development should function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just in the short term but over the lifetime of the development. In line with paragraph 130 of the NPPF, permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.
20. Section 16, 'Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment', states that Local Planning Authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal. In determining applications account should be taken of the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset.
21. The Council also has statutory duties under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 which requires that; *"In the exercise, with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area, of any of the provisions mentioned in subsection (2), special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area."*

### **Relevant Local Planning Policies and Guidance**

22. Policy 1 of the Core Strategy reinforces a positive and proactive approach to planning decision making that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework.
23. Policy 10, Design and Enhancing Local Identity, states that development should make a positive contribution to the public realm and sense of place and should have regard to the local context and reinforce valued local characteristics. In particular reference to this application is paragraph 2b), which takes into account the impact on the amenity of occupiers or nearby residents, 2(f), which takes into account the massing, scale and proportions of a development and paragraph 2(g) which assesses the proposed materials, architectural style and detailing.
24. Core Strategy policy 11, Historic Environment, states that proposals will be supported where the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings are conserved and/or enhanced in line with their interest and significance.

25. Whilst not a statutory document, the policies contained within the Rushcliffe Borough Non-Statutory Replacement Local Plan (NSRLP) should be given weight as a material consideration in decision making. Policy GP2, Design and Amenity Criteria, sets out the general criteria new development should meet. Of particular relevance are the following paragraphs:
- (a) This states there should be no significant adverse effect upon the amenity, particularly residential amenity, of adjoining properties or the surrounding area by reason the type of levels of activity on the site or traffic generated.
  - (d) This states that the scale, density, height, massing, design, layout and materials of proposals are sympathetic to the character and appearance of neighbouring buildings and the surrounding area; that they do not lead to an over-intensive form of development; and that they are not overbearing in relation to neighbouring properties, and do not lead to undue overshadowing or loss of privacy.
  - (h) There should be no significant adverse effect on any historic sites and their settings, including Conservation Areas.
26. Policy EN2, Conservation Areas, states that planning permission should only be granted where the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and where there would be no adverse impact upon the form of the area.
27. The 2009 Rushcliffe Residential Design Guide provides guidance on the style and design of an extension, stating it should respect that of the original dwelling and should not dominate over it. Extensions should be designed so that they are not readily perceived as merely 'add-ons' to the original building and therefore scale, proportion and roof form are very important.

## **APPRAISAL**

28. The main issue in relation to this application is the impact of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the converted barn at Old Stables Hall Farm and its setting within the surrounding Conservation Area. Due to the siting of the proposed extension there would be no material impact on the amenity of any neighbouring properties to the site.
29. The application site is part of a range of former agricultural buildings, now converted to residential dwellings. In general, buildings such as these are only deemed appropriate for conversion to residential use if this can be achieved without any significant extension or alteration. This is in order to preserve the traditional character and appearance of the buildings. In common with many barn conversion schemes, a condition on the original planning permission for the application site also removed all residential permitted development rights for extensions and alterations, in order to control future development post conversion.
30. The application site building has a typical narrow and long plan form and the design remains simple and functional. The building has retained much of its traditional character and appearance since its conversion. It is proposed to extend the building off the south western elevation into the garden area. This elevation faces into the former courtyard area and is considered to be the principal elevation of the building. To achieve the extension an unusual circular

design has been put forward based on the appearance of an agricultural silo. A glazed link would be used to connect the extension to the main building.

31. It is acknowledged that the innovative approach to the design of the extension has been in part chosen to clearly identify it as a separate element and protect the original form of the building. However, the extension would nevertheless still be physically attached to the building and detract from its simple linear form. It is considered that the addition would have a harmful impact on the character and appearance of this traditional barn conversion.
32. The proposed extension would be very prominently located at the southern end of the wing and close to the entrance of the site. This is also the most visible part of the building from the public realm outside the site. From this elevation it is considered that the extension would appear as very visually dominant and a disproportionately large addition to the building. Whilst the overall height is a little lower than the ridge line of the existing building the eaves height is the same. Including the link the extension would also be wider than the original building and, from this viewpoint, the original farm building would cease to be the visually dominant element on the site.
33. Whilst unusual, the design itself is also not deemed to be appropriate. The Design and Access Statement submitted with the application illustrates that a number of metal silos were present adjacent to the barns prior to the conversion of the buildings. However, these silos were stand-alone modern structures, not part of the original agricultural buildings. As stated by the Conservation Officer, they are considered to be functional features which generally detracted from character and appearance of the site. Removing them as part of the conversion scheme would therefore have been seen as one of the positive aspects of the original application.
34. The design therefore is not considered to be sympathetic to the character of the traditional farm building. The Conservation Officer has also highlighted that the proposed black timber cladding would be at odds with the surrounding materials in the area and would be likely to increase the visual prominence of the extension.
35. It is acknowledged that, to a degree the property's relationship with the rest of the former barn complex is no longer readily apparent. Part of the former inner courtyard now forms the property's amenity space and is laid to lawn. Considerable planting around the boundaries of this garden area has become established which has meant that the original plan form of the buildings and the 'U' shape of the former farmstead and central courtyard is, to a great extent, no longer apparent. However, notwithstanding this, the character and identity of the host dwelling is still derived from its relatively simple design and proportions and the traditional linear form of the range of buildings set around the central courtyard.
36. Whilst the innovative design of the scheme is acknowledged, it is considered that the proposal would ultimately result in an obtrusive addition to the building, which would appear out of place with its traditional character and appearance. The proposal therefore fails to accord with Core Strategy policy CS10 in terms of scale, materials and architectural detailing and fails to reinforce valued local characteristics and make a positive contribution to the public realm and sense of place.

37. The application site also lies within the Granby Conservation Area and within the Granby Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, September 2009, the application site building is specifically identified as a 'key unlisted building' which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Section 4.2.6 of this document states that development will normally be resisted if it adversely affects the setting of such key buildings.
38. As discussed above, the siting of the proposed extension is such that it would appear as a visually dominant addition to the building, highly visible from the public realm outside the site. It is therefore considered that the adverse impact of the extension on the host building would, in turn, detrimentally affect its setting within the Conservation Area and fail to either preserve or enhance its character and distinctiveness.
39. Paragraph 193 of the NPPF states that great weight should be placed on the conservation of heritage assets (which includes designated conservation areas). This is irrespective of whether any potential harm amounts to substantial harm, total loss or less than substantial harm to its significance.
40. The Conservation Officer is of the opinion that, given the location of the site on the edge of the village and Conservation Area, the harm arising would be less than substantial, but still significant. In this case paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that the harm should be weighed against the 'public' benefits of the proposal. The benefits of the proposal would arise to the applicant in the form of the provision of a larger kitchen area. However, it is considered that the converted dwelling, which provides three bedrooms, lounge, dining room and kitchen is of a size which is capable of providing a good standard of amenity without requiring any extension. Whilst the applicant may now personally require more space, the building has been functioning adequately as a dwelling since conversion and it is not considered that there is any public benefit which would outweigh the harm to the building resulting from its extension.
41. It is therefore considered that the proposal also fails to accord with Core Strategy policy CS11 and policy EN2 of the Rushcliffe Borough Non-Statutory Replacement Local Plan, both of which state that proposals should only be supported where they conserve and/or enhance the historic environment and heritage assets and their settings. It is also considered that approval of the application would mean that the Council has failed in its duties under section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to pay special attention to the preservation and enhancement of the surrounding Conservation Area.

## **Conclusion**

42. The proposed extension to the converted farm building is not considered appropriate in either design or materials and would compromise the character and appearance of this traditional farm building. The proposal would also fail to preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the surrounding Conservation Area. For the reasons set out above it is considered that the development does not accord with the national and local planning policies considered above and accordingly it is recommended that planning permission is refused.

43. The proposal was not subject to formal pre-application discussions and given the constraints of the site and the objection to the principle of an extension in this location, it was not considered that the scheme could be rendered acceptable through changes to the design/appearance of the addition and, on this occasion, negotiations have not been undertaken.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is RECOMMENDED that planning permission be refused for the following reason(s)

1. The proposed extension, by virtue of its design, materials and siting, would fail to respect the traditional form and character of the converted agricultural building and would have an adverse impact on the appearance of the property, which is part of a range of buildings identified in the Granby Townscape Appraisal as Positive Buildings/Key Unlisted Buildings. The proposal would also have an adverse impact on the setting of the property within the Granby Conservation Area and fail to either preserve or enhance the Conservation Area, as is considered to be a 'desirable' objective within section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This conflict gives rise to a statutory presumption against granting planning permission. The harm to the Conservation Area would be less than substantial, however, no public benefits to the scheme have been identified that would be sufficient to outweigh this harm.

The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policies 10 (Design and Enhancing Local Identity) and 11 (Historic Environment) of the Rushcliffe Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy (2014), Policies GP2 (Design and Amenity Criteria) and EN2 (Conservation Areas) of The Rushcliffe Borough Non-Statutory Replacement Local Plan, and guidance contained within The National Planning Policy Framework (2019).