



COMMITTEE REPORT

Item Number:

Ward: Blunsdon And Highworth

Application Number:
S/HOU/19/0492/RM

Parish: Stanton Fitzwarren

Proposal: Erection of a two storey extension.

Site Location: North Farm Barn, South Side, 2A Trenchard Road

Agent:

Mr Howard Waters

The Old Surgery

Crowle Road

Lambourn

Hungerford

RG17 8NR

Applicant

Mr P McNally

North Farm Barn

Trenchard Road

Stanton Fitzwarren

Swindon

SN6 7RZ

Officers Report

Background

Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council: request the application is considered by planning committee if the application is to be refused.

That planning permission be **REFUSED**.

1 The Proposal:

1.1 It is proposed to erect a two storey extension which would infill the joining of the two barn buildings which currently form an L-shaped footprint. The proposal would involve the erection of a two storey projection from the north-west two storey elevation separated from the smaller barn with a pitched and gabled roof with a ridge height taller than the smaller connecting barn. A two storey projection would then infill the

space with a roof running parallel to the north-west facade of the two storey building and connecting with the ridge height of the smaller barn.

1.2 The building is a grade II listed building, it lies to the rear of the existing Farmhouse which is also a Grade II listed building. The building is also within the Stanton Fitzwarren Conservation Area.

2 The Site and Surroundings:

2.1 The building is a grade II listed building, it lies to the rear of the existing Farmhouse which is also a Grade II listed building, in separate ownership. The building is also within the Stanton Fitzwarren Conservation Area.

3 Representations:

3.2 1 Neighbour objection: The first floor bedroom window will overlook the back garden and due to the way the sun sets, we have a seating area at the rear of the rear of the garden. Restrict privacy and unhappy with the proposed size and location of the bedroom window.

3.2 Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council Comments:

The PC support the application but would propose that the fenestration of the window is reduced. In addition, there is concern that the extension would overlook the neighbour's property/garden and would suggest that a screening condition.

2nd comments: The Parish Council advise that the extension would not be visible from the house of the neighbour, but would overlook the end of the garden. Discussions with the neighbour have taken place.

3.3 Following agreement between the applicant and the neighbour would it be suitable to add a condition for the applicant to add to his boundary wall with a screen or planting to screen the gap?

3.4 Conservation Officer: Expresses concerns.

Paragraph 127 of the NPPF, policies DE1, DE5 and EN10 of the local plan are relevant, when looking to undertake development, need to look at a surrounding context, setting, its character and particularly how the works affect the character and appearance of the surrounding heritage assets and how the works reinforce local character and distinctiveness.

3.5 The Historic England Guidance on traditional farm buildings seeks that developments "Retain existing historic openings and minimise alterations to prominent and significant external elevations, through careful attention to internal planning and how and where to introduce or borrow light. The size, proportion and detail of window and door design and materials has a major impact on overall appearance".

3.6 Whilst the building has been converted into residential use, important historic openings such as the full width opening to the threshing floor have been maintained. Whilst attempts have been made to retain this historic opening by placement of a similar opening at the front of the proposed extension, the extension completely alters

how the historic form and function of the building is read by the addition of 'fake heritage' which has little relationship to the existing structure.

3.7 Whilst the values which make up the significance are assessed in the Heritage Statement, there is a clear misunderstanding of how the values determine significance. It appears that there is confusion between how to assess setting and the conservation area as the heritage statement appears to judge setting as a Heritage Asset, which it is not and restricts the assessment of the Conservation Area to views from the public realm alone which is not a holistic approach as advocated by Historic England. The Heritage Statement contains a number of flaws and in the conservation officers opinion does not show a robust understanding of significance.

3.8 The proposed works would be an incongruous feature to the existing building which overcomplicates the design of this simple and functional building. The overcomplicated design also elevates the status of the building from a subservient and functional barn to be competing with the scale of the farmstead to the front. The building was specifically designed to form a courtyard of subservient agricultural barns to the rear of the farmhouse and its design, layout and openings are evidence of this. The covering of an important historic opening with a new projection would mean the L-shaped floorplan is lost with the junction being infilled by development which has an awkward juxtaposition with the existing building. The extension adds two different roof forms, one of which is taller than the single storey component with part of the extension joining onto the ridge of the existing building.

3.9 The proposed extension overcomplicates the design and is an alien feature that detracts from how the building is experienced in this agricultural context.

3.10 The scheme would result in an unnecessary visual intrusion which would not reinforce local character or local distinctiveness and be contrary to policies DE1 and EN10 of the Swindon Local Plan and paragraph 127 of the NPPF.

4 Planning Considerations:

Relevant Policy

4.1 The proposal must be assessed against the relevant development plan policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Development Plan consists of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (2015). The Planning Practice Guidance web-based resource (2014) and the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990 are also of relevance.

The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 was adopted on the 26th March 2015. The proposal will be assessed against the Local Plan Policies:

EN10: 'Historic Environment and Heritage Assets' and 'DE1: 'High Quality Design'

Other Policy/ Guidance

4.2 Conservation Principles Policies and Guidance for the Sustainable Management of the Historic Environment: English Heritage (2008)

- o Historic environment Good Practice Advice Notes 2, and 3
- o Swindon Residential extensions SPD
- o Wiltshire and Swindon Farmstead Guidance
- o Historic England Farms, Buildings and Traditional Farmsteads Guidance 2017
- o Historic England Advice Note 9 Adapting Traditional farm buildings 2017

National Policy

4.3 The Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (The Act) states that in considering whether 'to grant listed building consent for any works the local planning authority or the Secretary of State shall 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'.. S.16(2). Similarly the Act notes that "In considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall 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'" S.66(1).

4.4 The NPPF (2018) states: 'In determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary' (Paragraph 189).

4.5 In addition Paragraph 192 of the NPPF notes 'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of:

- a) the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- b) the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality; and
- c) the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness.

4.6 Paragraph 194 states "Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), should require clear and convincing justification."

4.7 Paragraph 196 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 including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use."

4.8 Significance (for heritage policy) is defined in the NPPF as:

The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Local Policy

4.9 Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (2015) Policy EN10: 'Historic Environment & Heritage Assets' states:

Swindon Borough's historic environment shall be sustained and enhanced. This includes all heritage assets including historic buildings, conservation areas, historic parks and gardens, landscape and archaeology.

4.10 Proposals for development affecting heritage assets shall conserve and, where appropriate, enhance their significance and setting. Any harm to the significance of a designated or non-designated heritage asset, or their loss, must be justified. Proposals will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, whether it has been demonstrated that all reasonable efforts have been made to sustain the existing use, find new uses, or mitigate the extent of the harm to the significance of the asset; and whether the works proposed are the minimum required to secure the long term use of the asset.

4.11 Any alterations, extensions or changes of use to a listed building, or development in the vicinity of a listed building, shall not be permitted where there will be an adverse impact on those elements which contribute to their special architectural or historic significance, including their setting.

4.12 Policy DE1 requires high quality design including context and character in respect of existing built characteristics and acknowledged features of importance and seeks to ensure that occupiers of existing properties are not unacceptably affected by new development in terms of light, privacy, outlook noise and disturbance.

Considerations

4.13 The main consideration in determining this submission is the impact upon the listed building and its setting.

Historic Environment Considerations

4.14 The barn building is a Grade II listed building along with the adjacent farmhouse.

4.15 A heritage statement is submitted with the application. With regard to the listed building itself, the Heritage Statement assesses the heritage asset, which is a misunderstanding of what 'setting' actually is. The subject building is experienced within the setting of the listed farmhouse because it is part of the greater farmstead and its design and layout reflects this historic relationship of the development of a courtyard behind the farmhouse which is still experienced today. The changing in design of the barn building in the way proposed affects how the barn building is experienced as part of the former agricultural farmstead. Whether it can be seen (as suggested by the heritage statement) misses why this component of the setting is significant to the main farmhouse. The setting of the farmhouse is an important element of the farmhouse's significance, whereby the subject barn forms part of a historic farmstead, of which the farmhouse is the primary building with a subservient farmstead behind. The changes proposed elevate the status of the barn building and

divert from the historic relationship of the barn to the farmhouse and this is why the proposed scheme would be harmful to the significance of the listed farmhouse, via its setting. Whilst significant, the proposal would cause less than substantial harm.

4.16 As discussed in Paragraph 127 of the NPPF, Policy DE1 and EN10 of the Local Plan, and the Residential Extensions SPD, when looking to extend and/or alter properties, need to look at a building's setting, its character and particularly how the massing and scale of the alterations affects the authenticity, significance, character and appearance of the listed building and how the alterations reinforce local character and distinctiveness.

4.17 The Conservation Area Appraisal highlights that the dwellings which make up the settlement front the roadside which continue the strong linear pattern of development with agricultural buildings and historic farmsteads and open land behind which create the distinct identity of the area which in this particular location is largely authentic to the settlement's historic layout and origins. Whilst it is argued in the application documents that the site cannot be seen and accordingly there is not harm, it should be noted that the conservation area covers both public and private realms and the significance is related to how buildings and their relationship with spaces are experienced. It is clear harm caused to the significance of the conservation area, which is predominantly related to its historic, evidential and aesthetic values, as a result of an extension which relates poorly to the form and function of the listed building and how the building is experienced within its agricultural context which detrimentally affect the character and appearance of the conservation area. Whilst significant, it is considered to be 'less than substantial'.

Consideration of harm upon the significance of the listed building and its setting

4.18 Paragraph 196 of the NPPF states that where there is "less than substantial harm", the benefits of the development are weighed against the harm, including the optimum use. The above specified policies of the Swindon Local Plan and accompanying guidance also seek to preserve the character and appearance of the historic context and ensure design and materials are appropriate for the historic environment.

4.19 The "less than substantial harm" caused as a result of the development is predominantly to the evidential, aesthetic and historic values of the historic building, via the proposed two storey extension which is taller than the existing barn and the 'hiding' of the features on the main barn.

4.20 There are no obvious public benefits to the proposed scheme, other than an extension for the owner, (which is a private benefit) and so in this case the balancing exercise of benefits vs harm in accordance with the NPPF has to conclude that there are no benefits of sufficient weight to override the less than substantial harm caused by the proposed works to the significance of the listed building and its setting. The proposed works would fail to preserve the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses, and therefore fails to meet the requirements of The Act.

4.21 The proposed scheme, as a result of the design, visual massing and siting, would result in an incongruous, prominent form of new development that has an unacceptable appearance which causes harm to the simple form and function and layout of the listed building which is key to its significance and how it is experienced within the setting of the listed farmhouse and the Conservation Area. The proposal would, therefore fail to preserve the traditional and agricultural local character and distinctiveness of the area and fails to make a positive contribution to the locality. Which is contrary to paragraph 127 of the NPPF and policies DE1 and EN10 of the Local Plan.

Other matters

4.22 There are near neighbours who would be affected by the proposed development, the proposal included as a large floor to ceiling window in the first floor bedroom. Whilst there is 15.5m between the rear of the extension and the rear garden of the neighbouring rear garden, there will be a perceived overlooking of that property. However, it is not considered sufficient to refuse the application on these grounds. No further comments have been submitted from the neighbour following the comments from the Parish Council. There would be no adverse impact on amenity to occupiers of nearby properties. In this respect the application complies with policy DE1.

Conclusion

5.1 In assessing the application, special attention has been paid to the significance of the listed building and its setting and whether those interests of acknowledged importance are preserved or enhanced. The existing building is characterised by its simple design, reflecting the functional nature of the agricultural building. The current scheme is considered inappropriate and will result in less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset

5.2 The proposed development fails to comply with Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990, the NPPF (2018) and policies EN10 and DE1 of the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026.

Recommendation:

Planning Permission be **REFUSED** for the following reasons.

Conditions/Reasons

1. The proposed scheme, as a result of the design, visual massing and siting, would result in an incongruous, prominent form of new development that has an unacceptable appearance which causes harm to the simple form and function and layout of the listed building which is key to its significance and how it is experienced within the setting of the listed farmhouse and the Conservation Area. The proposal would, therefore fail to preserve the traditional and agricultural local character and distinctiveness of the area and fails to make a positive contribution to the locality.

Which is contrary to paragraph 127 of the NPPF and policies DE1 and EN10 of the Local Plan.

2. The proposed development would result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset (the grade II listed property). There are no public benefits of sufficient weight to override the harm caused. As such the proposed development is contrary to paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2018 (NPPF).

Informatives

1. This refusal is based on plan numbers 1694.01; 02; 03; 06-B; 10; 11; 12; 13; and the Heritage Impact Assessment received 25 March 2019.