
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 October 2019

by L J O'Brien BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/D/19/3231320

Higher Centry, Willow Farm, Belle Hill to Centry, Kingsbridge TQ7 2HF

- 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 and Mrs G Patey against the decision of South Hams District Council.
 - The application Ref 0454/19/HHO, dated 11 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a single storey extension at Higher Centry, Willow Farm, Belle Hill to Centry, Kingsbridge TQ7 2HF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 0454/19/HHO, dated 11 February 2019 subject to the conditions set out below:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 886.18.07 Rev B, 886.18.05 Rev B, 886.18.04, 886.18.03, 886/18/02 Rev B, 886/18/01, 886.18.06.
 - 3) No construction above ground level shall take place until details and samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces (including the roof) of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) All new stonework shall be pointed in a mortar to match the colour and texture of the existing walls.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area with particular regard to the host building as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a two-storey converted barn with stone walls, timber windows and a slate roof. The barn is situated in a rural location with open views across surrounding fields. The barn is deemed to be a non-designated heritage asset by the Council. It seems to me that the asset derives its

significance from its previous use and its simple, traditional agricultural appearance.

4. The proposal is to construct a single-storey, lean-to, extension to the side of the building to meet the needs of the appellants who require an accessible toilet. The proposed extension would be modestly sized, set down from the eaves and back from both the front and rear elevations of the barn. The extension would, therefore, appear subordinate to the original building.
5. The proposed extension would be constructed using materials of a traditional nature. This would include stone-clad walls, timber windows and slate roof tiles which would match those used in the existing structure. These details can be secured by a suitably worded planning condition.
6. Though some agricultural character has been retained by the conversion, the barn already appears as a residential, rather than agricultural, building and is surrounded by associated domestic paraphernalia such as washing lines and garden furniture. The extension would alter the appearance of the building and further domesticate the structure. However, due to the existing domestic appearance of the building, the subordinate nature of the proposal and the use of complementary materials, this alteration would not be so substantial so as to markedly affect the nature or fundamental character of the building.
7. The rural location of the building, surrounded by open countryside, visually isolated from other buildings and accessed via a long track, contributes to telling the story of its agricultural history. This setting would be unaltered by the proposal. The small scale and unobtrusive design of the extension would retain the simplicity and legibility of the history of the building and the main structure would continue to dominate the site. Thus, the significance of the non-designated heritage asset would be preserved.
8. Moreover, the extension would be positioned on the less visible side elevation of the building and would be partially screened by vegetation and differences in ground levels when viewed from the main approach to the building. The barn is not visible from the highway from which the site is accessed but can be seen in some long-distance views towards the site. These views, however, are sufficiently distant that, due to its small scale, the extension would not detract from the character and appearance of the building when appreciated from these vantage points.
9. Whilst the proposed extension would obstruct the traditional openings of the threshing barn on the north elevation, the large, more visible, openings on the south elevation would remain, thus maintaining the retained agricultural character and history of the building. The two high level windows which would be constructed above the proposed extension would be timber framed and, whilst they may not relate to the historical use of the building, they would not be in a prominent position and would be sympathetically designed so as not to detract from the traditional appearance of the building.
10. I acknowledge that The Traditional Farm Buildings in the South Hams Their Adaption and Re-use Barn Guide, April 2004 (the Barn Guide) states that extensions will not normally be appropriate, particularly where they remove features such as threshing doors. However, the Barn Guide also suggests that extensions which relate in a general sense to the simple lines and robust nature of the original building, as well as its scale, form and materials can

provide a solution by responding to both the setting and the requirements of the new use. In my view, this proposal meets those guidelines by extending the barn in a sympathetic manner so as to facilitate its practical subsequent use as a residential dwelling whilst not harming the remaining significance of the non-designated asset.

11. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area or the significance of the non-designated heritage asset. Consequently, the proposal would accord with Policies DEV20, DEV21 and TTV29 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 – 2034, adopted March 2019 and the aims of the guidance set out within the Barn Guide. Amongst other things, these policies, in combination with The Barn Guide, seek to ensure that extensions are appropriate in scale and design, development proposals meet good standards of design and seek to protect the significance of non-designated heritage assets and traditional barns.
12. I also find no conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) which states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account before a planning judgement is reached. The Framework also promotes high standards of design and states that developments should be visually attractive and sympathetic to the character of the area.

Conditions

13. In the interests of precision and clarity I have undertaken some minor refinement to the suggested wording of the conditions proposed by the Council.
14. Alongside the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant plans (including, for completeness, plans showing the existing layout which were omitted from the Council's suggested condition) as this provides certainty. In order to ensure that the development has a satisfactory appearance I have imposed a condition requiring details and samples of the materials to be used to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council. This does not need to be a pre-commencement condition and, therefore, I have altered the wording accordingly. I have also imposed a condition requiring the mortar to match the existing building for the same reasons.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

L J O'Brien

INSPECTOR