



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2020

by Andrew Bremford BSc (Hons) MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/W/19/3238092

Old Mill Barn, Station Road, Isfield TN22 5XJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr James Kininmonth against Wealden District Council.
 - The application Ref WD/2019/0636/F, is dated 21 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is a new extension on the east side of the barn, allowing a new entrance area between the exterior and the main reception room. The proposed extension would comprise of an entrance lobby, an attached W.C., as well as a nook to house a fireplace opening on to the main reception and a small log store accessed externally.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted for a new extension on the east side of the barn, allowing a new entrance area between the exterior and the main reception room comprising of an entrance lobby, an attached W.C., as well as a nook to house a fireplace opening on to the main reception and a small log store accessed externally at Old Mill Barn, Station Road, Isfield TN22 5XJ in accordance with the terms of the application Ref WD/2019/0636/F, dated 21 March 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr James Kininmonth against Wealdon District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matters

3. The appeal is against the Council's failure to determine an application for planning permission within the statutory time period. In my decision, I have amended the description of development so that it is more concise. This still reflects the planning application proposal.
4. The Council's appeal statement refers to the submission Wealden Local Plan January 2019 (WLP), stating that it has been submitted for examination. However, as the WLP has not yet been adopted, I afford it limited weight in my consideration of this appeal. I continue to afford significant weight to the adopted Wealden District Council (Incorporating Part of the South Downs National Park) Core Strategy Local Plan 2013 (CS) and Wealden District Council Wealden Local Plan 1998 (LP).

Main Issue

5. I have had regard to the Council's appeal statement and reference contained therein to a previously refused planning application¹ for a very similar development, in so far as it provides clarity in terms of the reasons why the Council would have refused planning permission had it been able to do so. Thus, based on the evidence I have before me, I consider the main issue in this case to be the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area.

Reasons

6. The appeal building is a residential barn conversion situated on the outskirts of Isfield within a rural setting surrounded by open countryside. It is reasonably well screened by trees and other foliage in most local views and especially so from the east, from the direction of Station Road. However, the building is visible in views across the floodplain of the River Ouse from a footpath and bridleway to the south-west of the site.
7. The building has several extensions which in combination with the rooflights, domestically detailed glazed timber doors and windows and landscaped gardens have, to some extent, altered the character and appearance of the former agricultural building. Consequently, notwithstanding the timber sidings and roof form the once small-scale barn has noticeably lost its strong rural, utilitarian and agrarian character, appearing more as a substantial residential property set within landscaped grounds accessed via a long private driveway off Station Road. The internal wooden frame and roof, principally by virtue of its overall shape and mass, remain as foremost features of the building. In this regard I concur with the findings of the previous Inspector² that these features lend the barn its character and appearance as a former agricultural building.
8. The proposed development on the east elevation of the building would be a single storey lean-to extension and double height glazed extension forming a new entrance hall. It would incorporate two rooflights set flush into the lean-to and the existing flue would be relocated to project from the recessed fireplace alcove.
9. As a result of setting the roof height lower than the ridge height of the existing main building, in combination with the hipped design of the roof and overall scale of the entrance hall extension, which is designed to replicate a traditional barn threshing bay, the development would not visually dominate the east elevation of the building. Moreover, by virtue of its design, and in the context of the existing extensions and overall shape and mass of the existing roof, it would not be at odds with and thus would not erode the character of the building.
10. The proposed lean-to would differ in design to the existing lean-to aisle. However, by virtue of the lower subservient roofs of the lean-to below the line of the existing eaves of the main building, in combination with the aforementioned design characteristics, timber framed construction and lightweight glazed wall of the proposed entrance hall, the overall form and appearance of the development would not represent an overly dominant or domestic addition to the former barn in the context of the existing extensions,

¹ Reference WD/2018/1670/F

² Appeal reference: T/APP/C1425/A/88/089017/P4

rooflights and domestically detailed doors and windows. Moreover, although it would occupy part of the courtyard it would not significantly disrupt the lines of the original building taking into account that the courtyard is semi-enclosed by existing built form.

11. The proposal would allow the flue to be relocated away from the internal wooden frame of the building thus improving its legibility and protecting it from potential damage from the existing somewhat haphazard cranked flue that obscures the historic timber frame. In this regard the proposal positively contributes to a characteristic feature of the building.
12. Although visible from the courtyard parking area within the appellant's private land, as a result of the screening afforded by trees and other foliage and the presence of the existing extensions, the development on the east elevation of the building would not be readily visible in wider local views. Additionally, as a result of its position and overall height, which would be well below the ridge height of the existing main roof, the development would not be visible in long public views from the footpath and bridleway south-west of the site.
13. Notwithstanding that the development would introduce a more complex roof form visible from the courtyard parking area, the proposal would not significantly disrupt the overall shape of the roof. Hence, it would not adversely affect this characteristic feature of the building. The appearance of the roof of the main building, in long views from the public domain, would remain unaffected and so would not have an adverse impact on the visual and rural amenities of the Low Weald in this location.
14. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed extension would not be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and the wider area. Consequently, it would accord with Policies SPO2, SPO13 and WCS14 of the CS; Policies GD2, EN8, EN27, DC19 (HG10) of the LP; Chapters 10 and 11 of the Wealden Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2008 and paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework which, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is appropriate, sympathetic and related to the character of the existing building and surrounding area and the intrinsic quality of the historic environment is protected.

Conditions

15. I have considered the Council's suggested planning conditions and where necessary I have amended the wording in the interests of precision and clarity. The appellant was given the opportunity to comment on the Council's suggested planning conditions.
16. Planning permission is granted subject to the standard three-year time limit condition. A condition specifying the approved plans is necessary for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of certainty.
17. In the interests of the character and appearance of the host building and the area, it is necessary to impose a condition relating to materials, a condition to secure suitable joinery, including windows and doors and a condition to specify the finished colour of the flue.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Andrew Bremford

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 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: 1:1250 and 1:500 'Location Plan and Site Plan' P 2167 - 150 A; 1:200 'Proposed Block Plan' P 2167 - 159 A; 'Ground Floor - Proposed' P 2167 - 155 A; 'Roof Plan - Proposed' P 2167 - 156 A; 'Elevations - Proposed' P 2167 - 157 A; '3D Sketch Perspective' P 2167 - 160 A.
- 3) All external materials used in the construction of the development hereby permitted shall match the type, texture, tone, colour, size and profile of those used in the existing building.
- 4) Prior to the construction above ground level of any part of the development hereby permitted, detailed drawings at a scale to be agreed in advance by the local planning authority shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Such details shall include all new joinery, including windows and doors, elevations and sections through cills, frames and opening lights, including glazing bars and mullions, showing the relationship to the structure. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 5) The flue hereby permitted shall be finished in a matt black colour and retained thereafter as such.