
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2020

by S A Schinaia MSc EngD FGS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/W/19/3237830

The Wain, Bells Lane, Stibbard, Fakenham NR21 0EW

- 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 Ms Donna Clarke against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref PF/18/2340, dated 8 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as: 'conversion of redundant barn with extension to holiday accommodation'.
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Decision

The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

1. The decision notice and appeal form included 'Fakenham' in the address. I have also done so for the sake of clarity.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the conversion on the character and appearance of the existing building and the surrounding rural area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a barn located within the residential curtilage of a detached two-storey cottage, The Wain. The barn and the cottage are both old buildings with brick walls, whilst the rest of the property is residential garden. The property is at the end of Bells Lane, a private land accessed from Guist Bottom Road. The land around the property is either open countryside or residential garden. The barn has a rectangular shape, with a pitched roof. It is a modest-sized single storey building with a half mezzanine wooden floor.
4. The proposal seeks to convert and extend the barn to provide a two-storey holiday accommodation. The extension would involve increasing the footprint of the barn to its west side including a single-storey addition to its north side into a 'L' shaped form. The existing walls and roof of the barn would be raised by 900 mm. The overall footprint would almost double the existing plan. The resulting building would have a bonnet roof instead of the current pitch roof.
5. The barn is very modest in size (7.5 m by 4.3 m). The proposed extension, raising of walls to provide for an additional storey and different roof shape, although maintaining its modest size, would transform the barn into a building

with markedly different proportions and appearance. The proposed extension works would therefore constitute a substantial and incongruous addition in terms of shape and size that would be unsympathetic and detrimental to the current traditional character of the barn.

6. As the barn can only be seen in long views from a short section on Guist Bottom Road, the impact of the extension on the wider countryside would be minimal. However, given the similarities in terms of age and style, the proposed extension would introduce features that would be alien and incongruous alongside the traditional character of Wain Cottage. The proposal would therefore adversely affect the traditional rural character of its immediate surroundings.
7. A structural survey undertaken in connection with a previous proposal indicated that the existing barn is structurally sound and capable of conversion. Although no specific structural survey was undertaken to support the current proposal, there is evidence to confirm that the building is still structurally sound, although some remedial works would be required to the roof and walls. Consequently, the Council has not raised an objection to the conversion in principle and accepts that some alteration and extension may be acceptable. However, whilst it may be possible to extend the building without substantially rebuilding it, that does not make the scale of the proposal acceptable in this case.
8. For the foregoing reasons, I conclude that the proposed extension would be harmful to the character and appearance of the barn and the traditional rural character of surrounding area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies EC2 and EN4 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy (2008), which require the re-use and extension of buildings in the countryside to preserve their character and that of the surrounding area. The proposal would comply only in part with Policy EC2, which requires demonstration that the building is soundly built and suitable for its re-use without substantial rebuilding or extension.

Conclusion

9. For the reason set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S A Schinaia

Inspector