



## Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 23 March 2021

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

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 20 May 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/D0121/D/20/3258803**

**The Forge, Hillend, Locking, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, BS24 8PQ**

- 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 Crispin against the decision of North Somerset Council.
  - The application Ref 20/P/1282/FUH, dated 10 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 August 2020.
  - The development proposed is to raise roof and extend to rear elevation to create first floor. Alteration to exterior including new doors and windows (Resubmission of application ref. 19/P/2179/FUH)
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### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted to raise roof and extend to rear elevation to create first floor. Alteration to exterior including new doors and windows at The Forge, Hillend, Locking, WESTON-SUPER-MARE, BS24 8PQ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 20/P/1282/FUH, dated 10 June 2020, subject to the following 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: Existing Elevations (July 19), Existing Floor Plans (July 19), Existing Site Sections (May 2020), Proposed Location & Site layout (May 2020), Proposed Site Sections (May 2020), Proposed Floor Plans (March 20), Proposed Elevations (May 2020).
  - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
  - 4) The development shall not take place except in strict accordance with the measures outlined in section 4 of Bat Survey of The Forge, Hillend, Elborough Village, Somerset (ref C1162.001) dated 26 May 2020. If amendments to the methodology are required, details of the changes must be submitted in writing and agreed by the Local Planning Authority before relevant works proceed. The development shall then be implemented in accordance with the agreed changes.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

## Reasons

3. The appeal property, The Forge, is a former rural building within the Mendip Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As the property is within the AONB, I have a duty to ensure that the proposal would not undermine the statutory purpose of the AONB to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. In this instance both parties are in agreement that the proposal would not cause harm in this respect. For the reasons set out below I concur.
4. Planning permission for the conversion of the building to a single dwelling house and associated office workshop was granted in 1998. The Forge is a detached dwelling house with accommodation within the roof and is set back from the road, largely screened from public view. The dwelling occupies a substantial plot with a number of outbuildings. A number of other apparently residential properties are scattered amongst the surrounding greenery and fields.
5. The proposal includes raising the height of the original roof of the building, raising the eaves and roof height of the existing single-storey rear extension and the construction of a two-storey, gable end, rear extension with modern glazing and a balcony. Four rooflights to the front elevation, two rooflights to the rear elevation and the re-roofing of the existing link which connects the central dwelling to the wing are also proposed. Overall, the proposal seeks to increase the living accommodation by extending and reconfiguring the ground floor and providing space for a master suite, two bedrooms and three bathrooms at first floor level.
6. The appearance of the front elevation of the dwelling as extended would be only marginally different from the existing elevation. In my view, the proportions of the raised roof line, and the improved symmetry which would be created by the rooflights and the more consistent building line would respect the scale, proportions and appearance of the host dwelling.
7. When viewed from the rear, the proposal would indeed step away from the restrained form of the original building. This elevation would create the appearance of a more substantial property with a more domestic design. However, the dwelling is situated within a large plot which is capable of accommodating an altered dwelling of the size proposed. The alterations would be largely contained within a similarly sized footprint, the eaves and roof heights would be raised only marginally and the additional rear extension would not project significantly from the existing rear building line. Consequently, I consider that the proposal would respect the scale, character and appearance of the host dwelling and the extensions would not appear as disproportionately large additions.
8. A number of key characteristics of the building would also remain; the proportions of windows/doors to stone and the use of matching materials would ensure a sense of the buildings rural history would be preserved and would ensure that the alterations would sit comfortably within their context.
9. Furthermore, the dwelling is largely screened from public view and, though some views towards it are available from the private realm, these too are limited. In any event, I consider that the proposed alterations have been sympathetically designed so as to sit comfortably within their context.

10. I note that the extended building would have a more domestic character. However, the building is within the context of several other buildings which are overtly domestic in respect of their character and appearance. Furthermore, a significant amount of time has passed since the building was converted for residential use and, within this context and in light of the considerations I have outlined above, I do not consider that this move towards the further domestication of an already domestic building would cause harm.
11. For these reasons, I consider that the proposed extensions would appear as complementary additions to the property which would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, including the AONB, and would conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area.
12. As such, the proposal would accord with Policies DM32, DM38 and DM45 of the North Somerset Council Development Management Policies - Sites and Policies Plan Part 1, July 2016 (SPP). These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that the design of development proposals demonstrates sensitivity to the local character and setting taking into consideration the existing context. The policies also state that extensions, as part of the conversion of rural buildings or subsequently, should not be disproportionate to the original building and should respect the massing, scale, proportions, materials and overall design and character of the existing property. The proposal would also broadly accord with the aims of the North Somerset Council Residential Design Guide – Section 2: Appearance and Character of house extensions and alterations, April 2014.

### **Conditions**

13. Alongside the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant plans as this provides certainty. In order to ensure that the development has a satisfactory appearance, particularly given the sensitive location of the development, I have imposed a condition requiring the materials to be used to match those used in the existing building.
14. Additionally, in order to help ensure that wildlife and important ecological features are protected during the course of works I have also imposed a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the measures outlined in section 4 of Bat Survey of The Forge, Hillend, Elborough Village, Somerset (ref C1162.001) dated 26 May 2020.

### **Conclusion**

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

*L J O'Brien*

INSPECTOR