



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 24 May 2021

by David Wyborn BSc(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/D/21/3269355

Winnowers, Barnston Farm, Hingston Post to Kellaton Cross, East Allington TQ9 7PZ

- 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 & Mrs Feltham against the decision of South Hams District Council.
- The application Ref 3754/20/HHO, dated 17 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 19 January 2021.
- The development proposed is a householder application for extension to create garage, utility space and storage. Alterations to existing barn (resubmission of 1156/20/HHO).

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters and Main Issue

2. The Council refused the application for five reasons. These concern the various considered impacts that the different elements of the scheme would have on the building and area. I intend to combine them as a single main issue, which is whether the proposed outbuilding and extensions to the dwelling, and associated groundworks, would be acceptable additions to this dwelling and area, having regard to Winnowers being a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. Winnowers is a stone and cob barn with a slate roof that was permitted to be converted to a dwelling in 2003. Photographic evidence shows that, prior to conversion, the barn was surrounded by a range of substantial modern farm buildings and its presence was difficult to appreciate. As part of these conversion works these surrounding barns were removed and some of the land regraded to form a garden area. The converted barn now stands separated from the other dwellings and barns within this wider small group.
4. The converted barn is linear in form with few openings and the eastern elevation faces a parking area, garden and the wider countryside.
5. The Council explain that the barn should be considered a non-designated heritage asset because, in summary, the building has historic merit and is visible on the early editions of the OS maps of the late 19th century. This view appears not to be disputed and I have found no reason to disagree. The significance of the building as a non-designated heritage includes its combination of age, materials and the retention of character and appearance that reflects its agricultural origins.

6. I am conscious of the policy advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. This requires a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
7. The setting of the building in this case is fairly constrained and includes the views of the west elevation when arriving via the vehicular access and the areas in and around the garden where the east elevation is experienced in its rural context.
8. The site has some minor ancillary buildings, some of which are located adjoining the barn and others within the garden area. There is no garage or covered parking. The proposed outbuilding would incorporate two parking bays and a garden machinery store. I consider that such covered space would be reasonable to serve the needs of the site. The location of these ground floor service areas, with the position set to one side of the present parking area and perpendicular to the barn, would, in principle, form an acceptable courtyard feature.
9. However, the footprint of this building would be fairly sizeable and the depth of the structure would be similar to the width of the present barn. The ridge height, length of ridge and depth of building would combine to produce a quite substantial structure, with a bulky roof, that would rival the main barn. Consequently, this structure would not appear as a subservient outbuilding that would sit sympathetically adjoining the dwelling. It would create a building with an imposing presence which would be experienced together with the original barn, detracting from its setting and thereby harming the significance of the converted barn as a non-designated heritage asset. I consider that the level of harm to the significance of this non-designated heritage asset would be substantial.
10. Furthermore, as a consequence of the size and presence of the outbuilding, it would harm the character and appearance of the rural surroundings to the converted barn. The benefits from the screening of the more modern barn and associated activity behind would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm that would result from the addition of this outbuilding to the site.
11. The single storey utility link, between the proposed extension to the converted dwelling and the proposed outbuilding, would be to the side, clearly a modern and fairly light weight addition and would be read separately to the original building. It would have an acceptable design and would not be out of place or harm the importance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset.
12. The removal of part of the sloping bank and associated works along the broadly southern part of the building would open up the end gable of the building and change the relationship of the land to the first floor opening. However, it appears from the photographs that substantial earth movements have already taken place and farm buildings have been erected and subsequently removed in this general area.
13. The removal of the bank by the end gable would be likely to reduce the potential for any damp to the building. This lowering and removal of land is proposed to continue around to the west elevation where the base of the old agricultural building, which rises up the side of the main barn, would be

removed. This work would be beneficial to this western elevation of the building by re-exposing parts of the external wall thereby enhancing the appearance and setting to the building.

14. I appreciate that the building was constructed adjoining this end section of the bank. However, overall the combined ground works in this general area around these sections of the building would be of benefit to the fabric and setting of the building, would be in areas which have generally been disturbed in the past and the balance falls in favour of this aspect of the proposal.
15. In terms of the extension to the east elevation of the converted barn, I have carefully reviewed all the evidence. There is a section of stone wall that projects from the end elevation, stone projections either side of the main entrance and some roof rafters are shown on older photographs which at that time extended from the eaves of the building. This combination of evidence appears to indicate that there was some form of original or older section of the barn where the roof of the main building extended down over a covered area and which has subsequently been removed.
16. The proposal would broadly appear to replicate the likely form of the original or older form of the building with the roof continuing to slope down over the single storey space. The extension would extend across the width of the building and obscure much of the existing elevation, although it seems this may not have been the original outer wall in any case. The principle of a lean-to type addition as proposed is, therefore, something that would not be at odds with the likely original or older form and appearance of the building. This addition, as designed, would not require any further openings to the existing east elevation and therefore would not materially affect the fabric of the non-designated heritage asset. These are all considerations which weigh substantially in favour of the form of the addition.
17. Nevertheless, I have some concerns with how far the extension would project from the eastern face of the building. This is because it would go beyond the length of the existing wall that extends from the end of the north elevation. However, the room sizes would be unlikely to be functional if the extension was not as designed and, on balance, the extension would be of a satisfactory scale with the existing dwelling.
18. In terms of the detail, the continuation of the slate roof and the use of stone to the east elevation would match the main building and link with the end stone section of projecting wall. Some of the new openings would appear to follow a barn conversion approach with arched windows and timber sections to mimic the use of door openings. However, this approach would not be consistent as the windows to the kitchen area would have large blank openings, even if it is said that they may replicate an opening for cart storage. This combination and design of fenestration would be an unsympathetic mix and detract from the simple appearance of the lean-to addition and the form and character of the barn in its rural setting.
19. Drawing these matters together, the proposed extension would obscure much of the present elevation. However, it would be likely to reinstate an original or older element of the barn which appears, on the evidence available, to have extended across this face of the building in much the same way as proposed. The extension would be fairly sizeable, but would be single storey and not adversely affect the fabric of the barn and therefore when examining the

building, the existing plan form would be legible. On balance, the extent of projection from the face of the building would be acceptable. However, it is the amount and form of the windows to the extension that is the substantive concern. The fenestration is such that this element of the design would result in the extension as a whole being out of character with the building and would therefore harm the appearance of this non-designated heritage asset. This would lead to moderate harm to its significance.

20. Additionally, the large windows would be likely to allow light to escape from the kitchen area after dark and this would have an adverse effect on the rural area, albeit to a reasonably minor extent given the surrounding trees and other boundary screening. Nevertheless, this is a further adverse aspect of the proposal and the combined effect of the harm resulting from this extension would be to detract from the character and appearance of the rural surroundings.
21. The appellant has set out a range of repairs and improvements that would take place as part of the overall scheme. Some of these works, such as the removal of the plant room and the lowering of the ground levels to the western elevation would be valuable improvements to the site. Other works and changes, including the removal of the sheds adjoining the eastern elevation and the potential removal of vehicles from the parking area, would have minor benefits to the setting of the building and the area. I have taken into account all the beneficial and mitigating factors, including the improvements to the living conditions to the existing dwelling, that have been set out in the submissions and that are argued add weight to the case for approval. I accept that most of these would only take place if the scheme was approved. I have also considered the letter of support from a local resident and that the Parish Council raised no objections. However, notwithstanding these benefits, they would not outweigh the specific harm which I have identified.
22. In the light of the above analysis, I conclude that the side extension and ground works would be acceptable. However, the outbuilding would not be appropriate in scale and design in the context of the setting of the host building and the extension to the east elevation of the dwelling would be harmful because of the design of the fenestration. For these reasons, in each case, these elements of the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the adjoining area and harm the significance of the building as a non-designated heritage asset. It follows that these harmful aspects of the scheme would not comply with Policies DEV20, DEV21, DEV23, TTV26 and TTV29 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 and the Framework which seek, amongst other things, that development in the countryside should protect or enhance the character and historic assets and their settings.

Conclusion

23. For the reasons given above, the scheme would not comply with the development plan when considered as a whole and there are no material considerations that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Wyborn

INSPECTOR