



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2022

by Paul Singleton BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T2350/D/22/3290383

SWALLOWS BARN, WHALLEY OLD ROAD, BILLINGTON, LANCASHIRE BB7 9JE

- 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 Gary Parkinson against the decision of Ribble Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 3/2021/0859, dated 18 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2021.
 - The development is the retention of an unauthorised single storey extension to rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal seeks retrospective planning permission for a single storey extension that has already been constructed. A representation from the occupier of the adjacent dwelling expresses support for the development.
3. The former agricultural barn was converted to a dwelling under planning permission Reference 3/93/0244/P, granted in June 1993. Condition 5 of that permission had the effect of removing the permitted development rights for extensions and external alterations that would normally attach to residential dwellings under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015¹ (as amended).

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the appeal building.

Reasons

5. The materials used for the external walls of the extension are in keeping with those of the host building. However, because it extends over the full width of the rear elevation, the new addition has obscured more than 60% of the original rear elevation and has largely screened the windows in the upper elevation in views from the rear garden.

¹ The 2015 Order has replaced the 1998 version of the General Permitted Development Order that is referenced in the planning condition.

6. I agree that this has resulted in the substantial loss of the simple, and largely unadorned, original rear elevation to the former barn. The majority of the rear elevation of the extension comprises full height glazed panels. These large openings bear no relation to the proportions of the door and window openings or to the solid to void ratio seen on the exposed elevations of the original building.
7. The extension has been designed such that it does not obstruct views out of, or light entering, the first floor windows. However, because it includes a higher ceiling than the ground floor to the former barn, this has resulted in a complex roof formed by a short section of pitched roof immediately above the eaves, with the rest of the extension having a flat roof. The pitched roof is clad in concrete tiles to match the main roof to the dwelling but does not share the same angle of pitch. In combination with the flat roof section and stone copings this has resulted in a contrived and awkward appearance. This effect is stark when seen from the side of the building and when approaching the property on the shared access road. The roof construction is at odds with the simple gable roof of the original building and fails to respect the traditional style and character of the former barn.
8. The siting of the extension means that its rear elevation will not be on public view. However, public views of the property are available from Whalley Old Road, close to the junction with the shared access road to the appeal site, and from the public footpath which follows this track down the hill and passes the front of the building. Anyone standing on Whalley Old Road or joining and following the public footpath from this point has a very good view of the appeal property and of the adjacent section of the building and the farmhouse to which it is linked.
9. In that view, these physically linked buildings would, in my assessment, have previously been read and appreciated as a group of agricultural/former agricultural buildings in which the lower height section was easily identifiable as a working building adjoining the larger and taller domestic dwelling. Due to its complex roof form and large side opening, the building extension now stands out as an obviously modern and domestic addition to the former barn. This jars with the simple form and design of the original barn and reduces the ease with which its former role and use can be identified.
10. Historic England guidance on Adapting Traditional Farm Buildings 2017 advises that: "*Overtly domestic extensions... are alien in character and can rarely work successfully within the context of historic farm buildings*" (paragraph 3.11). As set out in the officer report, the general objective should be that traditional farm buildings should remain largely unaltered and continue to look like former farm buildings following their conversion to another use. The original conversion of the former barn appears to have been very successful in that regard but the new extension has undone much of that success.
11. I agree with the Council's assessment that the extension does not amount to a disproportionate addition in terms of Green Belt policy. However, I find that it has caused significant detriment to the historic character of the barn as a former agricultural building. Accordingly, the extension conflicts with Policy DMG1 of the Ribble Valley Core Strategy (CS) which requires development to be of a high standard of design which is sympathetic to the existing context in

terms of its scale, massing, style and features. As Policy DMH5 requires that proposals should comply with DMG1, a conflict with that policy also arises.

12. The appellant questions whether CS Policy DMH4 should apply to the appeal scheme but I consider that this does have some relevance. That policy sets out the considerations to be taken into account when determining applications for the conversion of former barns and other buildings to dwellings. Among the policy tests are that the building should be of sufficient size to provide necessary living accommodation without the need for further extensions that would harm the character and appearance of the building and that it be capable of conversion without the need for major alteration (paragraphs 1 and 2 of the second part of the policy).
13. The 1993 planning permission for the conversion to a dwelling predates the adoption of the CS. However, the approved plans and what I saw of the original conversion on my site visit suggest that that application would have satisfied the requirements of the current policy. The decision to attach Condition 5, in order that the Council could "*retain effective control over development*," indicates an intention that future extensions or alterations that might harm the character and appearance of the building should not be carried out without being fully assessed by the Council. Whilst not an application for a new conversion, the appeal scheme would cause such harm and would not be consistent with the purposes and objectives of Policy DMH4.

Other Matters

14. The appellant has referred to the presence of houses with large, modern openings on Whalley Old Road. I do not consider that these are comparable to the appeal building as a former barn of traditional character and appearance. The extension has increased the living area of the dwelling and allowed a good level of daylight in that new space. However, I do not consider that these private benefits are sufficient to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the building or the resultant conflict with the development plan.
15. I note that the appellant was unaware of Condition 5 on the 1993 planning permission but do not think that this alters the planning merits of the unauthorised development.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Singleton

INSPECTOR