
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 June 2022 by G Sibley MPLAN MRTPI

Decision by Louise Nurser BA (Hons) Dip UP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/D/22/3297582

Waterstone Barn, Lower Heamies Farm, Chebsey, Stafford ST21 6ND

- 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 Dr Louis Lotter against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/35006/HOU, dated 11 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is aluminium veranda with glass roof panels (11m wide x 3.5m deep) attached to side of house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The description of the development proposed on the application form included the reasons for the works proposed and in the interest of clarity I have taken the description from the appeal form, which was also, for the most part, repeated on the Decision Notice. This replicated what was written on the application form but omitted the reasoning and as such I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by this.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The barn is situated at the end of a group of conjoined agricultural buildings that have been converted into residential dwellings and are built around a central courtyard. The former agricultural buildings have retained many of the original features. The buildings have a narrow linear form, although there are single storey additions that extend out from the main bulk of the buildings. Where these additions are not brick built, they are typically a brown colour similar to the windows and doors across the converted buildings. Overall, whilst clearly in residential use, the converted former agricultural buildings have retained their agrarian character and appearance.

6. Policy E2 of the Plan for Stafford Borough (PSB) (Adopted 2014) has a number of requirements and those alongside and Policy N1 of the PSB require development to ensure that the form, bulk and general design is in keeping with its surroundings and not harm the historic fabric or character of any traditional buildings or historic farmsteads. As noted above the converted farmstead buildings have retained their agrarian character and appearance.
7. The veranda would be constructed from aluminium and the appellant has suggested a condition that would require this to be powder coated with brown paint to replicate the colour of the patio doors on this flank wall. The veranda would have a slim frame and would be open to the elements with glass roof panels. It would also extend out from the flank wall of the dwelling and as a result, it would not detract from the linear form of the building. Given the limited size of the proposal it would not appear as a disproportionate addition to the dwelling or the associated plot.
8. The buildings are clearly in residential use and small concessions to this use are evident across the wider historic farmstead. Consequently, minor domestic additions that do not detract from the overall agrarian character and appearance of these buildings would not necessarily appear alien in this context. Nevertheless, the proposed aluminium frame would be an intrusively urban material and even if painted brown, this material would contrast poorly with the tradition brick-built barn. Where a modern metal addition has been added to another of the converted barns, it was much smaller in scale than the proposal and thus its impact more localised. Moreover, that appeal was determined prior to the adoption of the PSB and as such was determined in a different policy context.
9. While the veranda would be relatively well screened by the existing building, surrounding boundary treatment and the closeboard timber fence, it would still be visible, and its alien appearance and specifically the proposed materials, would jar awkwardly with the traditional farm building. This would ultimately fail to respect the historic fabric and interest of the wider farmstead. Given the very limited scale of the proposal in relation to the landscape designation as a whole, any harmful impact upon the wider landscape and the associated landscape designation would be very limited.
10. Therefore, whilst the scale of the proposal would be proportionate, the design and materials proposed would add an overly domesticated addition to the host dwelling which harm the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area. Consequently, it would not comply with PSB Policy E2 or N1. The proposal would also not accord with the Design Supplementary Planning Document (2018) which states that extensions and alterations should be considered holistically with the original/main building to avoid awkward jarring of materials and forms. Finally, the proposal would conflict with the general design policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) and the intention to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings.

Other Matters

11. The proposal would provide cover for the patio doors which the appellant notes are prone to leaking which could lead to the frames being damaged. However, there is no substantive evidence that the proposal as devised would be the only scheme that could achieve this benefit. Moreover, whilst the proposal would

provide a covered outdoor space for the enjoyment of the property this would be a private benefit for the appellant.

12. There are several appeal decisions that have permitted extensions to the other buildings within the wider farmstead; however, those appeals were determined prior to the most recent revision to the Framework and in one instance prior to the adoption of the PSB. Therefore, there has been a change in the policy context which has led to a different decision in this instance.
13. Given that the Dutch Barn identified in Figures 8 and 9 of the appellant's Statement of Case has been demolished its relevance to the proposed scheme is effectively null and void. It no longer has any effect upon the landscape or the rural setting of this site for the proposal to be compared against.
14. The size and location of the proposed veranda would not harm the living conditions of the neighbouring occupants and the Council came to the same conclusion. Nevertheless, this would not overcome the identified harm.
15. The proposed veranda would be located a significant distance from the Public Right of Way (PRoW) and would not hinder or block the public from exercising their public rights safely.

Conclusion and Recommendation

16. The proposal would not accord with the development plan with respect of the character and appearance of the host building and the surrounding area and there are no material considerations that indicate that the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with it. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Sibley

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and, on that basis, I agree with the recommendation and shall dismiss the appeal.

Louise Nurser

INSPECTOR