

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 September 2022

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/D/22/3302999

The Barn, New Mills Lane, Truro TR4 9EU

- 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 J & J Watts against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application, Ref. PA22/03013, dated 25 March 2022 was refused by notice dated 26 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is a two storey extension to the existing barn.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey extension to the existing barn at The Barn, New Mills Lane, Truro TR4 9EU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref. PA22/03013, dated 25 March 2022 and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development to which this permission relates shall begin not later than the expiration of three years beginning with the date of this Decision;
 - 2) No development other than site preparation and the construction of foundations shall take place until details and samples of the external materials have first been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall thereafter be carried out in accordance with the approved external materials;
 - 3) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing No. Series 21095: Plans 3.001A; 3.002; 3.004; 3.005; 3.006B; 3.007B; 3.008B; 3.009B.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extension on the character and appearance of the host building and its countryside setting.

Reasons

3. The Council's concern is that the alterations and additions in the appeal scheme would in all respects be inappropriate for the host building. The officers' report on the application explains that the former barn is shown on historic maps (specifically an Ordnance Survey map dated 1875). Moreover, notwithstanding its conversion to residential use pursuant to a 1990 permission, it is considered that the converted barn has retained much of its former agricultural character.
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4. The combination of these factors is in itself considered sufficient for the building to be regarded as a 'non-designated heritage asset', and indeed I note that this 'ad hoc' approach is supported in paragraphs 2.179 & 2.189 of the Cornwall Local Plan: Strategic Policies 2010-2030 ('the Local Plan'). These paragraphs regard non-designated heritage assets as being any feature or structure as having '*a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions*' and in addition to positive identification in formal Plans and Documents this can be assessed within the 'Planning Processes'.
5. As regards this particular development proposal and its effect on the former barn, the driveway access from New Mills Lane leads to the hard surfaced area between the existing north east elevation of the building and the linear outbuildings on the north east boundary of the site. I regard this elevation, the outbuildings and the relationship between them as having the character of a typical feature of the agricultural rural landscape and its heritage. And apart from sight of the timber clad upper parts of the proposed extension's north east gable, there would be no change to this aspect and its character as a result of the development.
6. The officers' report additionally refers to the existing building's southern façade's retention of its agricultural character in terms of modest window sizes and 'ad hoc' positions, together with the high 'stone wall to window ratio', as being characteristic of a traditional barn. I agree with these comments, but the only difference between the existing and proposed south west elevations would be the addition of the proposed extension's south west gable, with the character of the original barn thereby retained.
7. Furthermore, as a result of the fall in the land the extension's north west elevation, the part of the extended building most easily seen from the access to the road, would have a ridge height below that of the existing converted barn. And with its timber cladding, limited glazing close to the eaves and natural slate roof sloping away, I consider that it would read as a reasonably proportionate addition with traditional external materials. The extension would also have the merit of replicating the 1875 map and reviving the original farmyard courtyard arrangement. I therefore agree with the appellants' view that this part of the proposed building helps to achieve the scheme's rural and agricultural character.
8. The proposed extension's south east elevation and the south west gable, with their large scale glazing and balconies are more contentious given their wholly different and modernist approach. However, apart from possible glimpses of the south west gable from Treiske Lane, the remaining views and aspects would be entirely from within this large and well screened site. In any event, I consider that the design of is a high standard and with the heritage features of the original barn remaining largely intact, there is no good reason to require a contrived pastiche development rather than the design needed to accommodate the additional facilities that the appellants require for the house.
9. Overall, I conclude that the both the significance of the non-designated heritage asset and its countryside setting would not be harmed by the proposed extension. Accordingly, there is no need to weigh any public benefit as specified in the Local Plan, albeit this is different to Government policy in paragraph 203 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 ('the Framework'). Nor would

there be harmful conflict with Local Plan Policies 12, 23 & 24; paragraphs 8, 130, 174 & 203 of the Framework, and Policies E1 & E4 of the Kenwyn Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015.

10. I shall therefore allow the appeal. A condition in respect of external materials will ensure a high quality development and safeguard the appearance and setting of the existing former barn. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans is needed for the avoidance of doubt and is in the interests of proper planning.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR