



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2023

By A. J. Boughton MA (IPSD) Dip.Arch. Dip.(Conservation) RIBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3425/D/23/3315711

The Byre, Meretown, NEWPORT TF10 8BX

- 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 Jonathan Stackhouse against the decision of Stafford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 22/35853/HOU dated 08 April 2022 was refused by notice dated 12 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is erection of single storey side extension.
-

This decision is issued in accordance with section 56 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended and supersedes that issued on 9 May 2023.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for single storey side extension at The Byre, Meretown, NEWPORT TF10 8BX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref: 22/35853/HOU dated 08 April 2022 and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The works authorised by this consent shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 51359/07; 51359/08.
 - 3) No development above ground shall take place unless and until details / samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details / samples.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the Forton and Meretown Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The Byre is a single dwellinghouse of two storeys which forms part of a grouping of eighteenth-century buildings converted in the late 20th century to residential use, all are located within the Forton and Meretown Conservation Area (Conservation Area). The Byre is linear structure orientated west-east, set back from, and perpendicular to, the adjacent rural road within a loose courtyard setting of other buildings, also formerly in agricultural use.
-

Subdivision to create appropriate residential curtilage for these dwellings has

resulted in a garden area to the Byre lying wholly to the west of the house and, at present only indirectly connected to the living areas. Windows and external doors to habitable rooms¹ face either² the courtyard area on the northern side or a narrow space on the south side.

4. The overall form and character of the Byre has been retained in terms of the external materials and uncluttered massing that is consistent with the surrounding building group. However, whilst brick detailing at eaves and in the east gable is likely original, the current pattern of fenestration, by the introduction of windows and garage doors that follow the change to residential use, appears to show a degree of change has taken place in elevational appearance. The Byre and other buildings in this converted group are read as a 'barn conversion' typology which accepts a degree of compromise to the retention of original form is necessary for their retention in a new use to be achievable³.
5. The proposed garden room would be an addition to the west gable wall providing direct access⁴ to the main external amenity space of the dwelling along with afternoon sunlight and westerly views which are not currently available due to the Byre's orientation. This would be a benefit of the proposal in terms of addressing what might reasonably be considered a deficiency in residential amenity.
6. The Council refers to policies E2 (d) and (h) and C4 (b) of the Plan for Stafford Borough 2011-2031 (2014) (TPSB) apparently doing so in relation to the approach to be taken to the conversion of rural dwellings. However, the Byre is already a dwelling and some decades have passed since the grant of the permission for its conversion. This proposal is not for conversion, where a different argument might be made, but for a modest extension to a long-established rural dwelling which would increase the floor area by less than 7%.
7. The Council refer to the extension as introducing 'contemporary architectural features' to the traditional form and character of the original buildings, meaning the introduction of a glassy oak framed gable wall with bifold doors. Whilst these features are not consistent with the former agricultural use, it is also clear that there have been other changes that have 'domesticated' the original built form and in that regard I find little conflict with the guidance given in the Supplementary Planning Document on Design (SPD) for residential extensions.
8. On that basis I now consider the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of The Byre and, in turn, the Conservation Area. Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision-takers to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing conservation areas.
9. Previous decisions have been brought to my attention. However, and notwithstanding the policy basis explained by the Council, the acceptability of changes such as that here proposed will vary from case to case according to the

¹ Other than a first floor opening on west gable

² Or both

³ Notwithstanding such change may require other consents

⁴ Whilst it is noted that the proposed internal layout retains the existing garage on the submitted plan, the interior layout and division of space within the single residential unit is not a planning consideration.

design and contextual factors. In this case the proposed extension would only affect the west elevation of the Byre which is largely enclosed by existing built form, would not be prominent in the courtyard or visible from the highway. It could be built in materials that match in colour and texture⁵ what is currently found, and the form and character of the existing building would be retained in all but private view. Overall, due to the discrete location of the extension I consider there would be negligible impact on the character and appearance of the Byre as a part of the building group.

10. For these reasons I am also able to conclude that the change which would result from the proposed extension would have negligible impact upon the character and appearance of the part of the Conservation Area in which the Byre is located. Consequently, due to the enclosed siting and design, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Forton and Meretown Conservation Area as a whole.
11. Overall I find no conflict with policies E2, C4, N1 and N9 of the TPSB which seek to ensure development proposals respect and protect rural character and sustain the significance of heritage assets, nor, therefore, with the development plan as a whole. The appeal succeeds subject to the usual timing and plans conditions and, for the reasons given, a condition requiring approval of materials to be used.

Andrew Boughton

INSPECTOR

⁵ Meaning the roof and flank walls