



# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023

**by S M Holden BSc (Hons) MSc CEng MICE CTPP FCIHT MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023**

**Appeal Ref: APP/C1435/D/23/3317106**

**Stream Farm Stables, Dern Lane, Chiddingfold, East Sussex BN8 6HG**

- 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 Joe Wheatley against the decision of Wealden District Council.
- The application Ref WD/2022/2968/F, dated 14 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 February 2023.
- The development proposed is replacement of zinc roof from existing rear extension with a new pitched and tiled roof along with the erection of a new front porch.

## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the proposal on the application form was given as: 'demolition of existing extension and erection of new extension and front porch'. However, the proposal was amended during the Council's consideration of the application and the agreed description of development, which was on the Council's decision notice and the appeal form, is set out in the above banner heading. I have determined the appeal based on this description and the associated amended plans.
3. There is a dispute between the parties as to whether the appeal building is curtilage listed. The appellant referred to two applications at Stream Farm Stables for which listed building consent was not required. However, these relate to the garage<sup>1</sup> and not the appeal building, which was granted planning permission and listed building consent for conversion from former stables to a dwelling in 2006<sup>2</sup>.
4. In 2012<sup>3</sup> the Council considered proposals for a detached garage and a single storey extension to the rear of the dwelling to form a sunroom. I therefore requested the documents relating to the 2006 conversion and the 2012 proposal to assist in my assessment of the appeal proposal. The officer report dealing with the planning application for the garage and extension stated that both were acceptable. However, the planning permission only imposed conditions relating to the garage. A second report related to the application for listed building consent for the extension. It considered that proposal in more detail, also concluding that it was acceptable. Listed building consent was granted subject to a series of conditions. Both these decisions were issued on 23 July 2012.
5. Based on the above, I find Stream Farm Stables to be a curtilage listed building. Therefore, alterations to it require planning permission and listed building consent. However, as no application for listed building consent was submitted, this appeal only deals with the application for planning permission.

<sup>1</sup> WD/2013/1434 and WD/2017/2432

<sup>2</sup> WD/2006/2623/F & WD/2006/2624/LB

<sup>3</sup> WD/2012/0971/F & WD/2012/0972/LB

## **Main Issue**

6. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve Stream Farm Stables, a curtilage listed building to Stream Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest that it possesses.

## **Reasons**

### *Significance*

7. Stream Farmhouse is thought to date from the 17<sup>th</sup> century or possibly earlier. The listing description states that it is mostly painted brick at ground floor level with first floor tile hanging and a tiled roof. Other features include casement windows and a later addition on its eastern elevation. It was listed in 1952 when the land in its ownership also included several outbuildings, one of which continues to provide stabling, garaging and storage for the host property. Stream Farm Stables co-joins this building along the shared boundary which now separates the land ownerships. This cluster of outbuildings buildings were previously functionally linked to the farmhouse.
8. The subsequent separation of land ownerships and the conversion of the stables to create a small independent dwelling has weakened the connections between Stream Farmhouse and this part of its former outbuildings. Even though no heritage statement was submitted with the application, it is apparent from the planning history that the significance of the converted stables derives primarily from their simple form, utilitarian appearance and the materials used in their construction and secondly, from their historic, functional relationship with the listed farmhouse.
9. The dwelling was formed from the conversion of the single-storey disused stables and a small two-storey barn with a store to the side under a catslide roof. These two buildings are at right angles to each other but were separate. The conversion was made possible by the construction of a small lobby that linked the two at the rear. The side store has become the kitchen with its large doors replaced by windows.
10. The listed building consent granted in 2012 replaced the small lobby linking the two buildings with a glazed sunroom. This extends part way across the rear elevation of the former barn and has a flat roof. The extension has a lightweight appearance and its materials, including hardwood posts and leadwork were subject to a series of stringent conditions. Its contemporary design and translucent appearance contrasts with the original buildings. The flat roof (which the plans indicated would be rolled lead, not zinc) enabled the pitched roof of the former stable block to be undisturbed. In addition, the brick elevation of the barn with its small central window continued to be the dominant features of the rear of the dwelling. This ensured that the significance of the building as historic outbuildings to Stream Farmhouse has been preserved.
11. At the front of the house the original relationship between the two buildings has been retained with the large gable of the barn and its catslide roof being prominent. The stable element, with its much smaller gable, is set back. Its front elevation, which includes the entrance to the house, aligns with the rear elevation of the barn. This unusual arrangement also helps to preserve the significance of the originally separate barn and stables which have been combined to form the dwelling. This is especially important now that the functional links between the outbuildings and Stream Farmhouse have been diminished with the separation of the land into different ownerships.

### *Assessment*

12. The existing flat roof on the sunroom is leaking and the proposal seeks to replace the rolled lead with a mono-pitched, tiled roof. This would give the extension a more traditional appearance. However, it would diminish the distinction between its lightweight contemporary design and the original building. The approval of the extension granted in 2012 was based on these specific aspects of the design, which ensured the significance of the original buildings was retained. The use of the flat roof also ensured that the pitched roof of the stables was not altered. By contrast, the current proposal would disrupt this roof resulting in an awkward arrangement between different pitches. It is not clear from the submitted details how the interface between the two roofs would be achieved and altered rainwater goods would be provided. Whilst I appreciate that maintaining a flat roof may be more challenging than one that is pitched and tiled, that is not a justification replacing it with one that would fail to preserve the significance of the original building.
13. The proposed porch would occupy the full width of the site between the existing barn wall and the boundary fence with Stream Farmhouse. Its depth would also project some distance along the original barn wall. Consequently, its overall footprint would be disproportionate to the converted buildings. The shape of its gable roof would detract from the gable of the original stables and the introduction of mock timbering would be a contrived approach to integrating it with the existing building. The scale and design of the porch have not been based on an understanding of the significance of the original modest and utilitarian outbuildings. Neither would the porch reflect the lightweight appearance of the contemporary rear extension which was found to be acceptable. It would therefore not be a sympathetic addition to the property's front elevation.
14. Taking account of all the above, I conclude that the proposed alterations, whether consider individually or collectively, would fail to preserve the special architectural and historic interest of the curtilage listed building, associated with Stream Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building. This would be contrary to the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, which requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
15. In terms of the National Planning Policy Framework, I consider this harm may be quantified as less than substantial. However, this assessment still amounts to a significant objection which I am required to weigh against the public benefits of the proposal in accordance with paragraph 202 of the Framework. In this case the alterations would only be of benefit to the occupants of the house. They are not public benefits which can be weighed against the identified harm.
16. This leads me to conclude that the proposal is unacceptable. It would conflict with Spatial Planning Objective SPO2 of the Wealden Local Plan Core Strategy, 2013, which seeks to protect the intrinsic quality of the district's historic environment. It would also fail to comply with the advice of the Framework in which states heritage assets should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.

### **Conclusion**

17. For these reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*S M Holden*

INSPECTOR