
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 November 2023

by T Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/23/3315179

Church Farm Barns, Church Road, Ringsfield, Beccles, Suffolk NR34 8LF

- 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 Vettese against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/3427/FUL, dated 10 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is extension to north elevation, dormer to south elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the building.

Reasons

3. Church Farm Barns is a residential dwelling set within a converted barn within an attractive countryside setting adjacent to Church Road, close to Ringsfield, to the south-west of Beccles.
4. I have been supplied with a photograph of the barn prior to its conversion and the current form, massing and extent of the building broadly accords with what is shown on the photograph. Then, as now, the evidence indicates that given its functional design the building had limited public facing openings.
5. The current public facing openings are limited and include those within what appear to be former openings adjacent to Church Road, as well as a limited number of reasonably discreet and well separated flush fitting rooflights which form secondary features within the tiled roofs.
6. The building therefore has a simple appearance representing a sympathetic conversion of a former barn resulting in a building of substantial character. That character is further embellished inside the building, with a non-standard upstairs room and stair arrangement that has been fitted around the limitations of the building.
7. Whilst appropriately limiting its openings and being set down beneath the main ridgeline, the extension to the north-west elevation would be a dominant feature in views when approaching the site from the north-west along Church Lane, encompassing much of and obscuring further sections of the dual pitched

roof which contributes significantly to understanding the building as a former barn.

8. The dormer window which would be provided to the south-east facing elevation has been designed to match the proportions and line up with the openings on the ground floor. However, that feature would further consume the roof-slope and would introduce an additional domestic style feature which would be detrimental to the appearance and understanding of the building as a converted barn.
9. Both aspects of the scheme would be likely to result in the loss of traditional material and fabric within the existing roof-slopes, further undermining the character and quality of the building. The additional/enlarged openings, particularly those proposed to the south-east facing roof-slope would further compound the harm.
10. The proposals would, when considered together, have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building. The proposal would subsequently conflict with policies WLP 8.9 and WLP 8.29 of the Waveney Local Plan (2019). Amongst other things these policies require extensions that would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the building and proposals which would complement local character and distinctiveness.

Other Matters

11. I appreciate that there did once appear to be other structures attached to the north-west facing elevation of the barn. However, what is proposed does not replicate these features which in any event appeared somewhat at odds with the main body of the building.
12. I appreciate that the internal arrangement may make family living somewhat more complicated than in a modern, purpose built domestic dwelling. However, there is nothing to indicate that the arrangement at the dwelling is so substandard as to cause significant harm with regard to current or future family arrangements and must be considered part and parcel of the trade off with living in a characterful and historic building not originally designed for domestic use.
13. I have been provided with photographs relating to other development. However, I cannot afford those matters any significant weight given that no level of detail has been supplied relating to those schemes. I note that they suggest that a gabled feature is not uncommon within local traditional buildings, with which I would not disagree.
14. The need for remedial works does not justify the proposal before me although I appreciate that work would be more difficult to justify until the development future of the building was decided.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

15. The proposals, when considered together, would have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the building. There is nothing to indicate that the proposal should be considered otherwise than in accordance with the development plan with which it would conflict. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

T Burnham

INSPECTOR