



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 March 2024

by K Reeves BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/K1128/D/23/3332076

Walfords Barn, Kingston, Kingsbridge, Devon TQ7 4HA

- The appeal is made under Section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Ian Fallon against the decision of South Hams District Council.
 - The application Ref is 2439/23/HHO.
 - The development proposed is single storey extension to existing dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. There are two planning appeals, both for the same site, but for materially different proposals. I have considered each proposal on its individual merits and the other appeal is the subject of a separate decision¹.
3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework was published on 19 December and updated on 20 December 2023. Whilst this made certain revisions to aspects of national planning policy, the provisions in respect of the matters relied on by the main parties are unchanged. Therefore, I did not need to consult with the main parties regarding the revised Framework.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal building.

Reasons

5. Walfords Barn is a two storey barn conversion that was changed to residential use in the 1980s. It occupies part of a traditional stone barn with the other part occupied by another residential unit, High Barn. The building is a good example of a traditional former agricultural barn as it has retained most of its agricultural and rural character with its simple form and traditional barn appearance. The site forms part of a group of traditional stone barns that have also been subject to conversion to residential units.
6. The proposed extension would occupy the entire gap between the side elevation of Walfords Barn and a stone boundary wall. This would involve the wall being incorporated into the extension. By extending entirely to the wall, despite its height being subservient to the appeal building, it would result in a

¹ Appeal reference APP/K1128/D/23/3326026

substantial addition to the former agricultural building that would overly elongate its linear layout and detract from its simple and well-proportioned overall form.

7. The front and rear elevations of the extension would not be set back from the outer faces of the appeal building by the amount set out in the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 2020 (the SPD). The appellant explains that in terms of the front elevation the position of the fireplace in the appeal building restricts the ability to set that elevation further back. I acknowledge and accept this, but the rear elevation of the extension would only be set back by a minimal amount. I note that the SPD is guidance, but this remains an issue in respect of the overall scale of the proposal.
8. The design and reasonably contemporary materials of the proposed extension would ensure that the development would be read as a modern addition. In particular, the materials would allow the extension to be seen clearly as not being part of the original building and therefore the legibility of the appeal building as a traditional former agricultural building would be preserved. However, the scale of the extension alone means that it would appear as an incongruous, unsympathetic addition to the appeal building.
9. The appellants submit that reducing the size of the extension would leave a narrow gap between the extension and the boundary wall, which may become unusable space and result in the side windows facing on to the boundary wall. It is also argued that the extension would result in an increase in floor area of less than 50%, in line with the guidance of the SPD. I understand and accept the appellants' reasoning as they have sought to follow the available guidance, but it does not resolve or override the identified issues with the overall massing and bulk of the proposal.
10. My attention has been drawn to a planning permission for the extension of a barn conversion at Long Barn in East Cornworthy². The appellants explain that that building was considered by the Council to be a non-designated heritage asset and that site is located in the South Devon Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Council appear to have approved a large extension of that barn conversion. I have been provided with details of that permission that appear to show the extension as linked to the appeal building and therefore visually separate, rather than a continuation of the building, as in this case. It is therefore difficult to make a meaningful comparison between the Long Barn extension and the appeal proposal. In any event, I am determining this appeal on its own individual merits based on the evidence before me.
11. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the appeal building. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies TTV29 and DEV20 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014 – 2034 (LP) and Policy KNP2 of the Kingston Neighbourhood Plan 2019 – 2034 (NP), which collectively seek, in part, to protect and improve the quality of the built environment, respect local character, safeguard local distinctiveness, and extend buildings in an appropriate manner in terms of scale. The proposal would also fail to accord with the guidance contained within the SPD and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Barn Guide: Traditional Farm Buildings, Their Adaption and

² Application reference 1866/23/HHO

Re-use' (the 'Barn Guide'), insofar as they seek to ensure that development maintains the standards and qualities of the building's character.

12. For the avoidance of doubt and without prejudice to my above findings, I do not find that Policy DEV23 of the LP is relevant to the determination of this appeal as the impact on the wider landscape has not been raised as an area of concern. Policies SPT1 and SPT2 of the LP are also not determinative as matters relating to sustainable development and sustainable linked neighbourhoods have not been raised as areas of concerns either.
13. Additionally, due to my findings against Policies TTV29 and DEV20 of the LP and Policy KNP2 of the NP, it was not necessary to deal with the appeal building as a non-designated heritage asset. As such, Policy DEV21 of the LP and Policy KNP10 of the NP have not been determinative in the appeal.

Other Matters

14. I understand that the intention is to change the occupation of Walfords Barn from holiday accommodation to a family home, and that the extension would help to facilitate this. Whilst this would lead to a contribution to the local housing stock, the provision of a single dwelling would carry limited weight and would not outweigh the conflict with the development plan identified above.
15. I note that the appellant considers the LP policies to conflict with the guidance contained within the 'Barn Guide', but it is not my remit to review whether this is the case.
16. The appellant has drawn my attention to the Parish Council and members of the public resolving to support the application. Nevertheless, I have considered the development on its merits based on all the evidence before me.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

K Reeves

INSPECTOR