



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 September 2024 by T Morris BA (Hons) MSc

Decision by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/R2520/D/24/3346528

Riverside, Manor Farm Barns, Evedon, Sleaford NG34 9PA

- 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 Jude Hill against the decision of North Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/0429/HOUS.
 - The development proposed is single storey porch extension to east elevation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host building and on the surrounding area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. Riverside forms part of a group of converted farm buildings laid out in a U-shaped arrangement which are now in residential use. They are set back from Church Lane and are surrounded by open countryside. The buildings occupied by 'Riverside' and the neighbouring property at 'The Old Crew Yard' are single storey in scale and their elevations comprise a mix of brickwork and stone walls and pitched, pantile covered roofs. The outer facing wall and roof form of these dwellings have a simple linear appearance. Consequently, they form part of an attractive arrangement of traditional buildings which have an overriding rustic aesthetic that is reflective of their agrarian origins. This positively contributes to the character and appearance of their rural surroundings.
5. Both parties have made me aware of a previous appeal at 'Riverside' for a similar porch which was dismissed in 2006 (Planning Application Ref 06/1566/FUL). The Inspector found that the porch in that case would have been an 'alien feature'. The appellant suggests that the context of the buildings has changed since the last appeal and that the buildings no longer read as a pure barn conversion.
6. However, from my own observations, the rural character of the buildings and their surroundings remains prevalent. The porch extension would unacceptably

interrupt the simple linear form of 'Riverside' and the general cohesiveness of the external perimeter walls of the converted barns. The extensive use of glazing would give the extension an overtly domestic appearance which would jar with the overriding rustic aesthetic of this range of buildings. The porch extension would therefore be an unsympathetic addition and for these reasons I reach similar findings to the Inspector that dealt with the previous appeal for a porch extension at 'Riverside'.

7. I accept that the visual effect of the proposal on the wider surroundings would be limited to some extent by its modest scale. However, as the porch would occupy a prominent location on the principal elevation, it would be discernible across the open fields from the Public Right of Way near St Mary's Church, albeit in distant views. In any case, limited visibility from the wider surroundings does not obviate the need for good design which reflects the character and context of the host building.
8. Whilst I accept that there are two porch extensions at 'Manor Farm Barns', the porch which was allowed on appeal (Planning Application Ref 11/0795/HOU) is more discreetly located within the internal courtyard of this group of buildings. Therefore, the circumstances were not the same. The porch to the external perimeter wall at 'Manor Farm Barns' was dismissed on appeal (Application Ref 11/0796) yet remains in situ. The Inspector in that case found that the porch on an external elevation would appear as an 'incongruous and domestic addition to the simple and traditional agricultural building'. This reflects my own observations in respect of the appeal proposal and the existence of that example does not justify development which would further erode the agrarian character of the converted buildings.
9. The appellant also suggests that the context of the buildings has changed as a result of various other structures including pergolas, stables, horse training/exercise/practice areas and mature and formal gardens. However, equestrian related development is commonly associated with rural areas. The pergolas and gardens are more typical of a residential use, but they have not unduly diminished the rural aesthetic of the former barns and the positive contribution the appeal dwelling makes to the character and appearance of these buildings.
10. I conclude, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building and on the surrounding area. In that regard, it would conflict with Policy S53 (Design and Amenity) of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2023) (CLLP) which requires amongst other things that development proposals should contribute positively to local character, be based on a sound understanding of the context and relate well to the site. The proposal would also conflict with paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires that developments are sympathetic to local character and history including the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

11. Applying a more flexible approach on the basis that the Government has increased permitted development rights since the barns were converted, would not recognise their distinctive agrarian aesthetic and that permitted development rights were specifically removed to preserve their character and

appearance. The appellant suggests that if the current provisions in the GPDO¹ relating to the conversion of agricultural buildings had been available before the barns were converted, that it would have provided a fallback allowing for the rebuilding of the barns under more relaxed design parameters. However, this is theoretical and is no longer a realistic prospect. Therefore, these matters do not justify the harm identified based on the existing site circumstances.

12. The examples of other decisions made by the Council provided include works to a listed farmhouse and developments at residential properties within Bassingham Conservation Area. These examples are not close to the appeal site and I am not aware of the full material planning considerations in those cases. Furthermore, they were approved in the context of two-storey dwellings and are not comparable to the distinctive form of 'Riverside' and its site-specific context. While I accept that the host dwelling is not in itself a heritage asset, this does not in itself advocate design which is not sympathetic to the character and appearance of the former barns at this rural location.

Conclusion and Recommendation

13. For the reasons given above, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed since it would conflict with the development plan.

T Morris

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

14. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR

¹ Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015