
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 January 2025

by **B Pattison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 04 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/24/3348362

The Old Byre, Sunt Farm, Caterfield Lane, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0RR

- 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 Susan Kathleen Worsfold and John Christopher Worsfold against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is TA/2024/260.
 - The development proposed is Proposed aluminium glazed veranda.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was updated on 12 December 2024. However, the sections pertinent to this appeal have not changed to such an extent as to affect the matters raised by the main parties. It has not therefore been necessary to seek their views and the revised version has been referenced in this decision.
3. The main parties agree that the development would not be inappropriate development within the Green Belt. From the submitted evidence and my observations on site I have no reason to disagree with this conclusion and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area bearing in mind the special attention that should be paid to the desirability of preserving listed buildings and their settings.

Reasons

5. The Old Byre is an L-shaped single storey dwelling which has been converted from a former agricultural building. The dwelling is part of a small complex of buildings which includes the Sunt Farmhouse and Sunt Barn, both of which are Grade II Listed. Collectively the buildings form part of a historic farmstead, which is accessed via a single lane track leading from Caterfield Lane.
6. In determining a previous appeal at the site¹, the Inspector considered that whilst the Old Byre is not itself Listed, it forms a group with the Grade II Listed Buildings at Sunt Farmhouse and Sunt Barn and is, in this respect, a heritage asset. The

¹ Ref: APP/M3645/D/10/2143261

physical layout of the Old Byre sits forward of the Sunt Farmhouse, when viewed from Caterfield Lane. The two buildings are closely physically related and, whilst now divided by boundary hedging, the layout of the historic farmyard can still be understood. Due to this, the Old Byre is intimately linked to the Sunt Farmhouse, and there is a clear historical and functional relationship between the buildings that existed over a significant period of time. The submitted evidence also indicates that the land on which the Sunt Farmhouse and former farm buildings stand was in the same ownership at the time of listing.

7. As such, the appeal building can be treated as part of the listed building. Therefore, I am mindful of my statutory duties in respect of Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) which requires the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving a Listed Building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses.
8. The Listing for the Sunt Farmhouse confirms that it dates from the sixteenth century, with nineteenth century alterations. It is two storeys in height with five framed bays with irregular fenestration consisting of mixed casements and horizontally sliding sashes. From my observations on the site visit and the evidence before me, the significance of the Sunt Farmhouse is largely drawn from its historic age and architectural features, and its contribution to the rural character of the area as a rural farmhouse forming part of a courtyard plan farmstead.
9. The Sunt Barn is also grade II Listed. It previously featured a crown post roof and was thought to have dated from the sixteenth century. However, it was destroyed in a storm in the 1980's, and was reconstructed in facsimile, albeit away from its original location. Notwithstanding this, the building contributes to the rural character of the area and the understanding of the historic farmstead.
10. The Framework makes clear that listed buildings are designated heritage assets. When considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, the Framework advises that great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting and any harm should have a clear and convincing justification.
11. The Old Byre has a pitched, tiled roof over dark boarded walls and a brick plinth. Following its conversion, which included the creation of a domestic garden, the building has a relatively domestic appearance in close range views. However, in distant views I find that the appeal building's long, low roof form, and the use of traditional materials retains its original agricultural character and it can be seen as a successful conversion. As one of the three key buildings within the grouping, the appeal building contributes to how Sunt Farmhouse and Sunt Barn are appreciated as part of the historic farmstead and this setting makes a positive contribution to their significance.
12. In that context, the introduction of a glazed veranda would introduce a significantly more domestic character which would not be in keeping with the character of the surrounding historic farmstead. The existing porch is constructed in materials matching the appeal building and its roof is a continuation of the main roof form. In contrast, the proposed veranda would be constructed in modern materials,

including glazing, and when viewed from Caterfield Lane and the track, it would project away from the existing roof form, increasing its prominence. As a result, it would be an awkward addition which would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, and the overall character of the complex of buildings as part of an historic Surrey farmstead.

13. I acknowledge that the veranda would not be visible from either the Sunt Farmhouse or the Sunt Barn. However, the effect on views from Caterfield Lane, the track and the surrounding open fields would cause harm to the host building and the setting of the Sunt Farmhouse and Sunt Barn. As the harm would be experienced only in these distant views, it would be at the lower end of less than substantial harm.
14. In causing harm to the host building and failing to preserve the setting of the listed buildings, I find that the proposal would, in the words of the Framework, result in less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage assets. In such circumstances, the Framework requires that the less than substantial harm should be weighed against the public benefits.
15. I understand that the existing temporary canopies used by the occupiers are damaged during inclement weather, and the proposal would enable the occupiers to dine outside in appropriate weather. This would, given the nature of the appeal proposal, equate to a private rather than a public benefit. This does not therefore outweigh the harm I have identified and the great weight given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
16. I therefore conclude that, because of its siting and impact on the surrounding public views, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host building and setting of the Sunt Farmhouse and Sunt Barn. This would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act, paragraph 212 of the Framework and conflict with Policies DP7 and DP20 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014) that seek to protect, preserve and wherever possible enhance the historic interest, cultural value, architectural character, visual appearance and setting of the District's heritage assets.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Pattison

INSPECTOR