



---

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2025

**by J J Evans BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 7 April 2025**

---

**Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/24/3355345**

**Riverside, Bridge Farm, Cards Mill Lane, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport DT6 6RW**

- 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 Mrs Esther Phillips against Dorset Council.
  - The application Ref is P/FUL/2024/02066.
  - The development proposed is to convert storage building to self contained annex.
- 

### Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of a storage building to a self-contained annexe at Riverside, Bridge Farm, Cards Mill Lane, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport DT6 6RW, in accordance with the terms of the application Ref P/FUL/2024/02066, and subject to the following conditions:-
  - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
  - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing numbers: 16/127/301 Rev A and 16/127/303 Rev A.
  - 3) Prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the manoeuvring and parking spaces shown on drawing 16/127/301 Rev A shall be constructed and laid out, and thereafter permanently maintained, kept free from obstruction, and available for the purposes specified.
  - 4) Prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, details of flood evacuation notices regarding flood warning and emergency evacuation procedures to be erected in numbers, positions, and locations with appropriate flood warning and emergency evacuation procedure wording, shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved notices shall be erected within one month of the approval of those details and maintained as such thereafter.
  - 5) Prior to first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, details of the bird and bat boxes to be installed on the building shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved boxes shall be erected and maintained as such thereafter.
  - 6) The annexe hereby permitted shall not be used or occupied at any time other than for the purposes ancillary to the dwelling currently known as Riverside, Bridge Farm, Cards Mill Lane, Whitchurch Canonorum, Bridport DT6 6RW.

## **Procedural Matters**

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. Comments of the main parties have been sought and consideration has been given to those received in reaching the appeal decision.
3. The appeal site is within the Dorset National Landscape (NL). As required by S245 of the Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023, special regard has been paid to seeking to further the statutory purposes of the NL.
4. Although the original application was made by Mrs E Phillips and Mr M Wood, the appellant has confirmed that the appeal has been made by Mrs Phillips, as referred to above.
5. It was apparent from the site inspection that part of the storage building had already been converted into a one-bedroomed dwelling. The Council has provided details of enforcement action taking place with regard to this dwelling and its garden, and it appears that the existing dwelling has previously been used as an annexe and as holiday accommodation. Irrespective of this, the appeal has been determined upon the basis of the submitted details and drawings, rather than what has and is occurring on site.

## **Main Issues**

6. The main issues in this case are:
  - whether the proposed dwelling would constitute a residential annexe to Riverside; and
  - whether the dwelling would be in a suitable location for residential development.

## **Reasons**

### *Annexe*

7. The appeal site comprises the main residence and its gardens, along with the storage building and a paddock. Positioned within the countryside the site is surrounded by fields to the south and west, with a bungalow to the east, and beyond the lane to the north there is a group of farm buildings and a holiday park. Part of the storage building has already been converted into a one-bedroomed dwelling with a garden to the south. Beyond this garden, and included within the red site line, there is a paddock comprising grazing land. The other part of the building is used as a workshop and for miscellaneous, mostly domestic, storage.
8. The existing dwelling would be extended into the storage area to create a two bedroomed home for a family member working partly within the family business. The annexe would be smaller in size and mass than the host dwelling, would be physically separate from it and would have its own garden. Apart from sharing the access to Riverside and utilising an allocated part of the existing parking area, the dwelling could be occupied as a separate home without any physical or functional linkages between it and the main dwelling.
9. The Framework requires that isolated homes in the countryside are avoided, subject to conditions that include, amongst other things, development that would re-use redundant or disused buildings and enhance its immediate setting. Similar

objectives are found in Policy SUS3 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015) (LP) and Policy UMV7 of the Upper Marshwood Vale Neighbourhood Plan (2020) (NP). These allow the adaption and re-use of rural buildings provided the existing building is of permanent and substantial construction, that the scheme would make a positive contribution to local character, and that the building would not need to be rebuilt or extended. The LP Policy states that such schemes can include open market housing where the building adjoins an existing serviced residential building and where the dwelling would be tied to the main property.

10. In this case the building is considered to be of permanent and substantial construction, and the Council has raised no concerns regarding the impact of the scheme upon the character and appearance of the area. The conversion would not require the extension or rebuilding of the building, and the appellant has agreed to a condition linking the dwelling as an annexe to Riverside. Irrespective of being independent of Riverside, the annexe would accord with these policy requirements, including being conditionally tied to the host building.
11. The site lies within the Dorset National Landscape (NL) where there is a statutory duty to conserve and enhance its natural beauty. Surrounding the appeal site the undulating landscape comprises fields and paddocks often bounded by hedges and hedge trees, amongst which are scattered farmsteads. The dominance of the farmed landscape is part of the special qualities of the NL. The Council has raised no concerns regarding the impact of the scheme upon the NL. The external appearance of the storage building would not be much altered by the conversion, and the extension of the garden into a paddock of grazing would be seen as part of the built-up nature of Riverside, its gardens, and the tourism uses as a whole, thereby according with LP Policy HOUS6, which requires, amongst other things, that extensions to residential gardens would not harm the rural character of the area. The scheme would further conserve and enhance the NL through the retention and ongoing use of a former agricultural building.
12. Having regard to the circumstances of this case, the annexe would accord with the above referenced LP and NP policies.

#### *Location*

13. LP Policies INT1 and SUS2 seek, amongst other things, a presumption in favour of sustainable development, with the strategic objectives of concentrating residential development in larger settlements. Outside defined development boundaries development will be strictly controlled, with specified exceptions allowed, one of which includes open market housing through the re-use of existing rural buildings.
14. The annexe would be within the countryside, with the nearest villages being nearly 5km away. Accessing day-to-day services, facilities and employment would necessitate the use of the private car as there is no public transport service nearby. Walking and cycling to nearby villages would be along narrow lanes that are neither lit nor have footways. Irrespective of the reliance of future occupiers upon the private car, the scheme would accord with the above referenced LP policies as it would re-use an existing rural building.

## **Other Matters**

15. Nearby residents have raised concerns regarding a loss of privacy and land ownership matters. There are currently high-level windows within the east elevation of the building, with one of these being replaced by a casement window, and there would be some loss of privacy to the neighbouring property. However, the single storey nature of the proposed dwelling, along with the separation that exists between the two would not result in a significantly harmful loss of privacy experienced by nearby residents. As regards property ownership, this is a matter between the parties concerned and has not had a bearing on the planning issues raised by the appeal.

## **Conditions**

16. The conditions suggested by the Council have been considered against paragraph 57 of the Framework. Where necessary and in the interests of clarity and precision they have been altered to better reflect these requirements.
17. The standard time condition has been imposed as the development proposed is different to that which is currently present. A condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans would avoid doubt and be in the interests of proper planning. Given the location of the scheme within the countryside and the protection afforded to such locations by national and local policy, a condition has been imposed linking the annexe to the host dwelling.
18. As two households would be sharing the same parking and turning area, a condition requiring the parking spaces to be laid out in accordance with the approved drawings and that the area is kept free of obstruction so as to allow vehicles to enter and exit the property in forward gear would be necessary in the interests of highway safety.
19. The Council has also suggested a condition requiring details of flood evacuation measures. As the property has experienced surface water flooding, this has been imposed in order to protect future occupants.
20. Both the Council and the appellant refer to the provision of bird and bat boxes, albeit these are not shown on the approved drawings. In order to provide biodiversity gain, the provision of these has been conditioned.

## **Conclusion**

21. For the above reasons the scheme would accord with the development plan when considered as a whole, and there are no other considerations, including the requirements of the Framework, that outweigh this finding. Thus, for the reasons given above and having considered all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

*J J Evans*

INSPECTOR