
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2025

by K E Down MA(Oxon) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/D/25/3371558

Church Farm Barn, Shingay Cum Wendy, Royston, SG8 0HJ

- 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 Dr & Mrs D Robertson against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01256/HFUL.
 - The development proposed is a first floor front extension, two storey rear extension, reconfiguration of stables to garage/workshop and replacement windows and doors.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. There is one main issue which is the effect of the proposed front and rear extensions and alterations on the character and appearance of the host dwelling, including its significance as a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in the small rural settlement of Shingay Cum Wendy (Wendy), set back from the highway but partly visible from it.
4. The appeal dwelling, Church Farm Barn, was converted from a sizeable historic barn in the 1990s. It is the largest building amongst a group of other former agricultural buildings historically associated with Church Farm. Neither the dwelling nor the surrounding buildings are listed and they do not lie within a conservation area. Nevertheless, they are considered to be of local heritage significance as undesignated assets and I agree with this assessment. In view of the substantial level of alteration to the fabric of Church Farm Barn, I consider that its significance lies mainly in its historical and aesthetic value as a key building in the group of traditional agricultural buildings situated in the rural setting of Wendy.
5. The National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF) states at paragraph 216 that: the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

6. Church Farm Barn is predominantly clad in traditional dark stained horizontal boarding over a brick plinth. Attached to the western end is a 1.5 storey section which is in turn joined to a single storey front projecting outbuilding which appears to have been used as stables. Further single storey outbuildings on the eastern side of the entrance create a semi-enclosed yard. The appeal site extends to the rear of Church Farm Barn with additional outbuildings and a large, rural garden that gives way to woodland to the rear. The site as a whole retains a rural character.
7. The building has been noticeably altered over the years, including through the insertion of domestic style windows and doors. It has the appearance of a dwelling despite its strong agricultural character. To the front, the original simple linear form has been disrupted by the addition of a large, prominent, relatively recent lean-to front extension.
8. The area immediately to the west contrasts with the rural character of the appeal site with a new development of modern dwellings and there are also modern dwellings adjacent to Flecks Drive which provides access from Flecks Lane, the main street through Wendy, to the appeal site and the new housing. The original Church Farm House lies to the east, now separated from the farm buildings.
9. The proposed development includes the conversion of the single storey front projecting stable building into a garage/workshop. The Council does not raise any objection to this, and I agree it would be acceptable. I shall therefore restrict my further consideration to the extension and alteration of the dwelling.
10. The proposed front extension would project to the same building line as the existing single storey extension but would appear as a taller addition with a ridge and eaves set below those of the original barn. It would have a front facing gabled elevation which would be predominantly glazed. Inside it would create a vaulted entrance hall. Although it would be a large addition, in the context of the existing building it would appear modest. Owing to its limited depth, set down ridge and eaves and width that would result in sympathetic proportions it would, despite altering the barn, amount to a harmonious addition that would introduce a different but nevertheless recognisably agricultural character.
11. In heritage terms, the appellants note that there would be no alteration to any historic fabric. Moreover, although no evidence remains, a large opening on the front elevation of the building may have existed in the past and would have been characteristic of similar historic barns in the region. The use of glazing, whilst giving a more contemporary appearance, would also mimic the characteristic openness of a large porch entrance on a traditional barn. Overall, the extension would alter the appearance of the front elevation of the building but would not materially detract from its heritage significance as the primary barn in a traditional farmyard setting. In consequence, I find the changes acceptable.
12. Turning to the proposed rear extension, this would project some 8m off the rear elevation of the dwelling, which retains its original linear barn form. It would be some 8m wide and rise to a two storey gable with a ridge and eaves below those of the host building. Owing to its significant width and depth it would materially alter and detract from the simple linear form of the rear elevation, dominating the building not only when seen from the rear but also when viewed from the sides. In these views, the significant expanse of pale brick would be overwhelming and out of keeping in a building complex where brick above plinth level is rarely seen.

Overall, it would appear as an incongruous and bulky addition that would detract from the historic and aesthetic significance of the building as a former traditional linear barn. Although the use of glazing in the rear elevation of the extension would provide more permeability, the extension would nevertheless appear as a conspicuous and unsympathetic addition.

13. The appellants suggest that the proposed rear extension would be subservient owing to the lower ridge and eaves height. However, although much smaller than the host barn, its form, siting, design and materials would draw the eye such that it became an unduly prominent element on the simple rear elevation. They also point out that historically there was a rear addition to the building. However, this appears on only one map extract from 1887 but is not shown by 1902. Moreover, there is no evidence of its height or construction. I do not therefore consider that it sets any precedent for the proposed substantial addition.
14. Finally, it is suggested that, as the proposed extension would be to the rear, it would not be visible from the public realm and would be read as a contemporary addition that would not detract from the character of the building as a converted former barn. However, good design and protecting historic significance does not depend on visibility from the public realm and, as reasoned above, I consider that the rear extension would materially detract from the character, appearance and heritage significance of the barn.
15. In terms of fenestration, proposed alterations to the front elevation would be modest and I find them acceptable. The existing openings to the rear are limited, given the scale of the rear elevation. This would be consistent with an historic barn. Nevertheless, the windows are clearly domestic, are arranged in an inconsistent pattern and at ground floor exhibit different styles. There is also a small, domestic scale door which appears out of keeping. Overall, the fenestration, whilst limited, does little to preserve or enhance the character of the original building.
16. It is proposed to simplify the large openings at ground and first floor at the western end of the barn and replace the ground floor windows and door with two similar sets of glazed doors. Although this arrangement would introduce more glazing, the more consistent scale and pattern of the fenestration would, in my view, result in a simpler and more cohesive arrangement that would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the existing dwelling in the context of its origin as an historic barn. I therefore find it acceptable.
17. The NPPF requires that in the context of applications affecting non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement is made having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset. In this case, the loss of significance that would arise would be moderated by the extensive alterations to the building that have already taken place and by its predominantly group value. Nevertheless, the proposed rear extension would fail to preserve the historic and aesthetic value of the original building, diminishing its significance. Taken in the context of the identified detriment to the character and appearance of the dwelling that would result from the rear extension, this would only serve to exacerbate the overall degree of harm.
18. It is concluded on the main issue that whilst the proposed front extension, conversion of the stables to a garage/workshop and alterations to fenestration would be acceptable, the proposed rear extension would be materially detrimental

to the character and appearance of the host dwelling and would detract from its heritage significance as a non-designated heritage asset. In consequence, it would conflict with Policies S/7, HQ/1, H/13 and NH/14 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, 2018 and the NPPF. Taken together and amongst other things these expect development to be of a high quality design that makes a positive contribution to the local and wider context, preserves or enhances local character and important heritage assets and is appropriate to its surroundings in terms of scale, mass, form, siting, design, proportions and materials. In particular, extensions to dwellings are expected to be in scale and character with the existing dwelling and to sustain and enhance the significance of heritage assets, including non-designated assets, as appropriate to their significance.

19. The appellants suggest that the internal alterations that would arise from the proposed development would improve the internal living environment and enable the creation of a ground floor bedroom in the future. However, whilst that may be so, this would not justify the harm to the character and appearance of the building as set out above.
20. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

KE Down
INSPECTOR