



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 August 2024

by **D Cleary MTCP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 September 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/W/24/3340714

Marshfield Barn, New Inn Road, Hinxworth, Hertfordshire SG7 5HB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Jones against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02947/FP.
 - The development proposed is described as single storey front and rear extensions to existing redundant barn to facilitate conversion into one 4-bed dwelling and landscaping (as amended by plans received 2nd February 2024).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. In the banner above, I have taken the description of development from the Council's decision notice rather than the application form. This is because the scheme was amended during the course of the application to remove a proposed car port. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal building is a barn which has a narrow and linear footprint. The building has a largely open front elevation, while the side and rear elevations are constructed of brickwork with timber cladding above. The building has a lean-to roof, finished with corrugated metal sheeting. The barn is located close to a small cluster of buildings in a relatively isolated open countryside location. The orientation of the barn is such that it projects away from the nearby group of buildings, and into its host field which has an open character. The orientation of the barn, along with mature intervening vegetation means that it appears detached from the nearby cluster of buildings. As such the barn itself appears as an isolated building within an otherwise open and rural landscape. A public right of way passes close to the barn, from which the building is clearly prominent.
5. The scheme proposes the conversion and extension of the barn to a dwelling. The building has an extant permission for its conversion following approval by

the Council through the prior approval procedure¹ ²(the approved scheme). I do not have full details of the approved scheme but understand from the appellants statement that it utilised the existing footprint only and, therefore, without extension³. This demonstrates that a conversion of the building can be carried out without the need for extension. Policy CGB4 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (the LP), states that the re-use of a building will be granted provided that the building "*does not require major extension or reconstruction*" and, that the "*resultant building(s) do not have a materially greater impact on the openness, purposes or general policy aims of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt than the original building(s)*".

6. The proposed extensions would be sited to the front and rear of the barn. The front extension would have a depth, width and design which are not informed by the proportions or form of the existing building. Further, the extension would have a ridge that continues the height of the existing building. This height adds further emphasis to the scale of the extension. The front extension would appear as a large addition which would project by some distance away from the narrow and linear barn. The front extension would significantly increase the overall footprint and mass of the building.
7. The rear extension has a depth which is similar to that of the host building. In isolation, this would double the depth of the existing building, but would be set well away from the side elevations. The modest width and depth would ensure that the extension would appear proportionate to the host building. Nonetheless, while I have no particular concern with regard to the scale of the rear extension, it needs to be considered cumulatively with the front extension which, alone, represents a significant addition. The rear extension would only further increase the extent of built form added to the original structure. Therefore, I find that the additions, together, would represent major extensions to the existing barn.
8. The large front extension, by reason of its degree of projection, height and overall design would appear markedly at odds with the simple linear form of the existing building. The extension would not appear as a closely confined addition to the building. On the contrary, it would project by some distance away from the building and into the open landscape. This would be exacerbated by the isolation of the barn as the extensions would not be viewed in the context of other buildings. The effect on the openness of the landscape, due to the scale of the front extension, would be most apparent from the adjacent public right of way, which currently enjoys views across the open landscape. Consequently, the front extension would erode the open landscape setting in which the building is set. Therefore, I find that the development would have a materially greater impact on the openness of the rural area.
9. For the above reasons, the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the proposed development conflicts with Policy CGB4 of the LP which, amongst other things, requires that development does not have a materially greater impact on the openness of the Rural Area beyond the Green Belt.

¹ Approval Ref: 22/00547/PN

² As set out in Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended)

³ Approved floor Plan on page 3/10

Other Matters

10. The appeal site lies within close proximity to a listed building and can be considered to fall within its setting. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (LBCA Act) requires me to have special regard to the desirability of preserving listed buildings, or their setting, or any feature of special architectural or historic interest which they possess.
11. Hinxworth Place is a grade II* listed building which is located centrally within the cluster of buildings adjacent to the appeal site. The presence of intervening buildings and mature vegetation would mean that the proposed development is unlikely to appear visually in context with the listed building and, therefore, there would be limited intervisibility between the two. As such, I find that the proposals would not visually detract from its setting.
12. For these reasons, I consider that the setting of the nearby listed building would be preserved.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

D Cleary

INSPECTOR