



Appeal Decision

by C Sweet MPlan

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 17/03/2025

Appeal reference: CAS-04028-C1T1X9

Site address: Rear Barn, Manor Farm, St Bride's Road, St Brides Netherwent, NP26 3AT

- 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 D Mould against the decision of Monmouthshire County Council.
 - The application Ref DM/2024/00516, dated 20 April 2024, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2024.
 - The development proposed is modest two storey extension to create larger kitchen/dining on the ground floor with home office over.
 - A site visit was made on 5 March 2025.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a modest two storey extension to create larger kitchen/dining on the ground floor with home office over at Rear Barn, Manor Farm, St Bride's Road, St Brides Netherwent, NP26 3AT, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DM/2024/00516, dated 20 April 2024, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a converted barn with an existing single storey rear projection, located in the rural hamlet of St Brides Netherwent. The appeal site sits outside of the settlement boundaries defined in the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (the LDP) and is therefore located in the open countryside for the purposes of planning policy.
4. My attention has been drawn to appeal decision ref. APP/E6840/D/20/3261603. Notwithstanding that some time has passed, there is little evidence of any material change to the immediate area or the appeal property since that decision and I agree with the previous Inspector's assessment of the characteristics of the appeal property and the area as set out in paragraphs 5 and 6.
5. Policy H4 of the LDP sets out criteria to be applied to proposals for the conversion and rehabilitation of buildings in the open countryside for residential use. It makes clear that those criteria are also to be applied to proposals to extend such buildings converted previously. Criteria a) and f) state, among other things, that extensions to previously converted buildings will only be permitted where the bulk, form and general design of the

proposal would respect the rural character and design of the building and that only 'very modest' extensions will be allowed.

6. The Council's 'Rural Conversions to a Residential or Tourism Use' Supplementary Planning Guidance (the SPG) provides further guidance on the meaning of 'very modest' for the purposes of policy H4. It states, inter alia, that extensions need to ensure that any additions respect and harmonise with the existing building in relation to its size, scale and form, that extensions must be unobtrusive and subservient to the existing building in every respect and that extensions that would introduce incongruous elements will not be permitted.
7. These principles are also reflected in criteria c) and f) of Policy DES1 of the LDP, which among other things, require that development should respect the existing form, scale, siting, massing, materials and layout of its setting.
8. There is some dispute regarding the percentage increase in built form arising from previous alterations to the appeal property and the total that would therefore arise from the proposed extension. However, neither policies H4 or DES1, nor the SPG impose a specific limit on the percentage increase in built form that might arise when defining a 'very modest' extension for the purposes of the LDP in any event.
9. Due to the positioning of the appeal property and the presence of nearby buildings, existing hedgerows and other boundary treatments, views of the proposed extension would largely be confined to a limited number of points along St Bride's Road close to the appeal site when approaching from the north. In longer range views from the northwest, it would be viewed against the main part of the appeal property.
10. As a result of its scale, massing and positioning, the proposed extension would appear as a subservient addition, reflecting the stepped ridge height of the main roof and the scale and form of the existing barn. The gabled northern elevation and pitched roof of its two storey aspect would reflect the rural vernacular of the main barn, the existing single storey projection, and of other buildings nearby. The use of finishing materials similar to those of the main barn, which could be secured by condition, would create a degree of visual continuity between the proposed extension and the existing building.
11. Whilst the proposed fenestration in its northern elevation would be sizeable and would mark the proposed extension as a contemporary addition, this would serve to distinguish it from the original building, the simple form and traditional rural appearance of which would therefore remain readily appreciable when viewed from the nearby highway and surrounding locality.
12. Moreover, the shape of the proposed fenestration in its two storey aspect would be reflective of a 'cart' entrance commonly found in converted rural buildings and of other, similar fenestration found in the locality. It would therefore not appear incongruous when viewed against the traditional appearance of the appeal property or within the existing local context.
13. Notwithstanding the percentage increase in floorspace that would result from the proposed extension, in combination the foregoing factors would result in a sensitive addition that would harmonise with the main building, respecting its traditional rural character and that of the immediate area in terms of its form, scale, massing, materials and overall appearance.
14. I therefore find that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area and complies with policies H4 and DES1, and the overall aims of the SPG.

Conditions

15. The submitted plans and Green Infrastructure Statement set out proposed biodiversity enhancement in the form of hedgerow and wildflower planting and the provision of bat and bird boxes. The Council has indicated its satisfaction that the proposed planting would provide a proportionate degree of enhancement and, given that the proposed bat and bird boxes are in addition to those measures, I see no reason to disagree.
16. However, the submitted information does not include full details of timings and implementation and as such, I consider that a condition requiring a scheme for biodiversity enhancement to be submitted to and approved in writing by the Council is necessary to ensure such enhancements are effectively secured, in accordance with Policy 9 of Future Wales.
17. The Council has also suggested a condition requiring the submission of samples and approval of the materials to be used in the external finishes of the proposed extension. I agree that such a condition is necessary to ensure that the materials used relate effectively to those used in the original building and to avoid harm to the character and appearance of the area. I have therefore imposed a condition to that effect.
18. The Council's suggested condition also incorporates clauses for the retention of the approved materials and for the approved samples to be retained on site during construction. However, I do not consider that these aspects are necessary to make the proposed development acceptable and as such, I have amended the wording of the condition to remove them, and in the interests of clarity and precision.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.
20. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards one or more of the Welsh Ministers' well-being objectives.

C Sweet

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development shall begin not later than five years from the date of this decision.

Reason: In accordance with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

- 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Proposed Floor Plans ref. [PP] 03, dated March 2024, Proposed Elevations ref. [PP] 04, dated March 2024, Existing and Proposed Site Block Plans ref. [PP] 05, dated March 2024.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans submitted with the application.

- 3) Prior to the construction of the extension hereby permitted, samples of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of the character and appearance of the area, in accordance with policies H4 and DES1 of the Monmouthshire Local Development Plan.

- 4) No development shall take place until a scheme for biodiversity enhancement has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: In the interests of maintaining and enhancing biodiversity, in accordance with Future Wales Policy 9.