



Appeal Decision

by G Hall BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Decision date: 23.04.2026

Appeal reference: CAS-04751-D9G0V7

Site address: Great Panta Barn, Panta Farm, Coal Road, Devauden, NP16 6SS

- 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 Alistair Brooke against the decision of Monmouthshire County Council.
 - The application Ref DM/2025/00611, dated 13 May 2025, was refused by notice dated 3 October 2025.
 - The development proposed is a 1.5 storey outbuilding in a steel frame timber clad to provide storage for external equipment, vehicles, bicycles, workshop and utility area on the ground floor and guest rooms and home office on the first floor.
 - A site visit was made on 14 April 2026.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The original description of development referred to a balcony on the first floor. As this element has been removed from the scheme, I have taken the description of development from the decision notice and appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed outbuilding on the character and setting of the converted barn.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached, two-storey converted barn within a wider agricultural landscape setting. The site is accessed via Panta Farm, and another converted barn lies to the south. Rising land and mature trees provide a degree of enclosure to the north, west and east. A restricted byway and footpath also pass through the site.
5. The simple, functional form of the appeal property, together with the retention of original features, ensures that much of the building's agricultural character remains legible. Although elements such as modern glazing and domestic paraphernalia, including a mown lawn, driveway and play equipment, clearly indicate its residential use, the building nonetheless retains a strong visual relationship with its rural surroundings and continues to read as a former agricultural structure within the wider landscape.

6. Policy H4 of the adopted Monmouthshire Local Development Plan (LDP) sets out criteria for the conversion and rehabilitation of buildings in the open countryside for residential use. Amongst other matters, it requires that proposals respect the rural character and design of the building, are of a scale sympathetic to the surrounding landscape, and do not require the provision of ancillary buildings. It also expects that converted buildings be capable of providing adequate living space within their existing structure, with permitted development rights for extensions and ancillary buildings typically removed. The policy further says that the criteria it sets out will be applied to proposals to extend buildings that have already been converted. As the policy and its supporting text clearly make reference to ancillary buildings, I am satisfied that the policy applies to both extensions and to ancillary buildings and is applicable in this case.
7. The Council's 'Rural Conversions to a Residential or Tourism Use' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) provides further guidance on extensions and ancillary buildings and says that new build outbuildings will not normally be acceptable except where modest in size and sensitively located. These principles are also reflected in criterion c) of LDP Policy DES1, which says that development proposals are required to respect the existing form, scale, siting, massing, materials and layout of its setting and any neighbouring quality buildings.
8. The proposal is for a substantial detached outbuilding comprising two levels and including a double garage, guest bedrooms, a bathroom, a home office, a workshop and a utility area. Whilst it would be physically separate from the main barn, the amount of floorspace and range of domestic functions would result in a building that would read as a significant new structure, rather than a modest and sensitively located outbuilding.
9. Although the building would adopt a relatively simple design, its scale, massing, siting and multi-level form would mean that it would not appear subordinate to the host barn. Instead, it would be perceived as a visually prominent and competing structure alongside it. This relationship would undermine the simple, functional character of the converted barn and its continued legibility as a former agricultural building, resulting in an unduly domesticated grouping of buildings.
10. This harm would be readily appreciable within the site and in views from the surrounding land, including the restricted byway and footpath. In these close-range views, the outbuilding would be seen in direct association with the barn, where its scale and presence would detract from the barn's rural character and setting. Whilst I acknowledge that wider visibility may be limited, and that visibility alone is not determinative, the harm would arise from the relationship between the buildings in their immediate context and is not diminished by the extent of public views.
11. The appellant has referred to a number of other cases said to be comparable. However, based on the information before me, these differ in terms of their context, scale and policy background. In particular, there is no clear evidence that LDP Policy H4 was a material consideration in all cases, and some appear to pre-date the current development plan or relate to extensions or alterations rather than new outbuildings. Whilst I have had regard to these examples, they do not provide a direct comparison with the appeal proposal, which I have therefore determined on its own merits having regard to the specific circumstances of the site and the development plan.
12. I have also considered the appeal decision at St Brides (Ref: CAS-04028-C1T1X9). However, that case concerned an extension to a converted barn within a more developed hamlet context, where other buildings were present nearby. Both the nature of the development and its setting differ materially from the current proposal, and I therefore attach limited weight to that decision.

13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character of the converted barn, contrary to criteria a), b) and f) of LDP Policy H4, the guidance within the SPG, and criterion c) of LDP Policy DES1.

Other Matters and Conclusion

14. The appellant explains that the existing dwelling cannot readily accommodate their functional needs and that there is a desire to provide vehicle and bicycle storage, workshop and utility space, outdoor equipment storage and guest accommodation in one building, rather than through smaller structures spread around the site. Whilst I do not doubt that the proposal would provide practical benefits, these are personal considerations and attract limited weight. They do not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character of the converted barn.

15. I have considered the inclusion of a home office and its potential to support home working, reduce the need to travel and contribute to a better work–life balance. However, the evidence before me does not demonstrate that these needs could not reasonably be accommodated within the existing dwelling, nor that any reduction in travel would amount to a meaningful public benefit. In any event, any such benefit would be limited and would not outweigh the identified harm to the character of the host building.

16. I have also taken into account the proposed planting of additional trees and hedgerows and the contribution this would make to green infrastructure, biodiversity and the ecological value of the site. Whilst these are positive aspects to which I attach moderate weight, they do not outweigh the harm identified in relation to the main issue.

17. For the above reasons and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

18. 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.

G Hall

INSPECTOR