
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2012

by **John L Gray DipArch MSc Registered Architect**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 8 March 2012

Appeal Ref. APP/H0738/A/11/2166637

Blakeside Stables, Blakestone Lane, Grindon, Stockton-on-Tees, TS21 3LE

- 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 Martin Booth against the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
 - The application, ref. 11/1378/RET, dated 23 May 2011, was refused by notice dated 25 July 2011.
 - The development proposed is the alteration of the profile of the stable building roof and the insertion into the roof of four rooflights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed. Planning permission is granted for the retention of the altered profile of the stable building roof and the insertion into the roof of four rooflights at Blakeside Stables, Blakestone Lane, Grindon, Stockton-on-Tees, TS21 3LE, in accordance with the terms of the application, ref. 11/1378/RET, dated 23 May 2011, and the location plan and drawing no. DS260311 submitted therewith.

Clarification

2. The application sought retrospective permission for works already carried out. Planning permission ref. 06/0878/FUL was granted for the erection of stables. The plan form of what has been built is so very little different to the dimensions of that approved as not to be at all significant. As built, however, the stables have a higher eaves level, a steeper roof pitch and thus a much higher ridge line. Four rooflights have been inserted in the roof. I interpret the "alteration of the profile" in the application description to include the higher eaves level.
3. The reason for refusal of the application refers to the "scale, size, form, design, internal layout and materials". The ground floor layout has not physically changed. One of the stalls was being used for hay and bedding storage (and is annotated as such on the application plan) but the construction remains as for a stall and there is no reason why it could not revert to that use at any time. A staircase of a very domestic character has been installed in the feed store, giving access to a loft which has good headroom, is well insulated and is lit by the four rooflights. That is the appellant's choice; the development remains subject to the use approved by the original permission and the internal works are not relevant to what was actually proposed in the application. The external materials were approved by the Council in discharging a condition attached to the original permission. Details of the roof form as now constructed were included as part of that submission but the Council's stance is that that was not information required in order to be able to discharge the condition.

4. The Council also says that one of the other conditions attached to the original permission has not been discharged, rendering the stables as built unlawful. Nevertheless, the Council obviously considered it appropriate to accept and determine the application. I shall deal with the appeal without prejudice to any action the Council may wish to take in relation to any undischarged conditions on the original permission.
5. Shortly before the appeal site visit, drawing no. DS260311 Rev. A was submitted. This drawing shows the openings in the stable walls as actually existed when I made my site inspection but makes no alterations to the roof, which was the sole subject of the application. Accordingly, while the greater accuracy of Rev. A is acknowledged, there is no need for it to replace the application plan.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is whether the stables as built are intrusive in the landscape.

Reasons

7. The rendered wall finish and the roof tiles are entirely appropriate for a building in this rural area. They were approved by the Council in relation to the original design. They are also the materials used in the neighbouring stable building immediately north of the appeal site (the roof tiles have a different profile but the visual effect is similar from a distance). The fact that the building is taller than in the originally approved design, and the rendered gables thus larger, does not alter the essential appropriateness of the materials.
8. On first sight, it is obvious that this is a stable building, albeit a little taller and bulkier than one might expect for such a building. That, however, does not render it inappropriate or intrusive in the rural scene. It also appears to be significantly higher than the stable building to its north – but the reason for that is primarily the difference in ground levels of around a metre. In fact, when they are seen together, the two buildings form an innocuous but pleasant composition, not inappropriate in the landscape.
9. The Council criticises what it sees as the domestic character of the building. That is certainly not true of the views one gets from the road to the south or the access to the stables and the residential properties close to the north-east. Such a character might be argued as stemming from the style of the rooflights and of the window in the west elevation. However, there are just three, relatively small, shuttered openings in the north elevation and just the one window in the west elevation; even given the style of the rooflights, there are simply too few window and rooflight openings to give the building a domestic or residential character. It remains a building with the appearance of a stable (or similar) building, even if it is larger, and thus more prominent, than that originally granted planning permission.
10. Accordingly, and bearing in mind that permission was granted for a stable building and that the external materials were approved in relation to that permission, there is no conflict with what is sought by adopted Core Strategy Policies CS3 and CS10, saved Local Plan Policy EN13, national policy and guidance in Planning Policy Statement 7: Sustainable Development in Rural Areas or the Draft National Planning Policy Framework.

John L Gray

Inspector