
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2016

by Debbie Moore BSc (HONS) MCD MRTPI PGDip

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

Decision date: 15th November 2016.

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/W/16/3152882

Land at Embley Lane, East Wellow SO51 6DN

- 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 C Monckton on behalf of Embley Properties against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00339/FULLS, dated 9 February 2016 was refused by notice dated 1 April 2016.
 - The development proposed is barn, gated access and hard standing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are: (i) whether it is essential for the development to be located in the countryside and (ii) the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Location

3. The site is located within a predominantly rural area, outside of any settlement boundary, and is within the countryside for development plan purposes. Policy COM2 of the Local Plan¹ seeks to direct new development towards the most sustainable locations. Development outside of the boundaries of settlements is restricted to: (a) that which is appropriate in the countryside or; (b) where it is essential for the proposal to be located in the countryside. Both parties agree that the development would not fall within any of the types of the development identified in the Local Plan as those which are appropriate in the countryside. Therefore, the proposal must be considered against part (b) of Policy COM2.
4. The appellant states that the proposed barn is essential for the secure storage of haymaking equipment and animal feed, and to provide shelter for livestock. The Council has recently granted planning permission for a "barn, gated access and hard standing track"², which the appellant considers to be evidence that the building is required on the site, as this is where the listed agricultural operations take place.

¹ Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan Development Plan Document 2011 – 2029 (adopted January 2016)

² Ref 15/02327/FULLS

5. The full balance of considerations that informed the previous decision is not before me and I have very limited evidence on the need for a building of the size proposed. It appears that the field is used primarily for haymaking but this does not necessarily require a large storage building on site. There is no information to explain why the haymaking equipment and feed cannot be stored elsewhere. Also, the field is relatively small and is unlikely to produce a large quantity of hay. Although the building would also include livestock pens, there is no information on the need for such a shelter in this location. As I have no further evidence before me of any other agricultural activities taking place, I conclude it has not been demonstrated that it is essential for the proposal to be located in the countryside. The proposal would not, therefore, meet the aims of Policy COM2.

Character and Appearance

6. The appeal site is a field located on a rural lane which is bounded by established trees and hedges. The surrounding area is characterised by relatively large houses located within spacious plots separated by open fields. The barn would be a substantial building, with a steeply pitched roof and would contain windows and barn doors. It would be clad in timber and would have a clay tile roof.
7. I appreciate that the external design resembles that of a medieval barn, the example given is the mid-15th Century Priors Hall Barn which is located in Essex. Whilst the external appearance may be similar to a historic barn, there is very limited information which explains why such a design would be appropriate in this location. The site is not part of a historic farm complex, and although there may be listed buildings in Wellow, there are no similar structures to that proposed in the immediate vicinity. Consequently, I am not persuaded that the reference to Priors Hall Barn provides justification for the revised design of the development, which has led to an increase in its height.
8. I have also considered the document produced by Hampshire County Council in relation to historic farm buildings. This confirms that there are a number of historic farm buildings in the County. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate the historic significance of the appeal site and why the proposed design would be more appropriate than the approved agricultural building.
9. The building would be partially screened by the existing trees and hedges but it would still be visible in views from the lane and nearby properties, due to its size. The barn would stand out as an unusual feature because it would not have the low key design and appearance of a rural agricultural building. The development would not integrate, respect or complement the character of the area. I saw from my site visit that there are scattered houses in the vicinity, some of which are visible from the road, but this does not justify further development as this would erode the rural character of the area.
10. Whilst measures may be incorporated into the structure to enhance biodiversity, this does not overcome the harm that would result from the development as described above.
11. I conclude that the development would have an adverse effect on the established character and appearance of the area. It would not meet the aims of Policies E1 and E2 of the Local Plan which seek to secure high quality

development and ensure the protection, conservation and enhancement of the landscape of the Borough.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Debbie Moore

Inspector