
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2016

by Penelope Metcalfe BA(Hons) MSc DipUP DipDBE MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 08 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/D/16/3159425

Hidden Barns, Horton Road, Horton, LU7 0QR

- 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 Mike Sells against the decision of Aylesbury Vale District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02753/APP, dated 23 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 19 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of 3 bay timber carriage house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises two single storey rectangular timber barns converted to residential use. They lie parallel to one another either side of an area laid out as a courtyard with paving and grass. The larger barn is converted to living accommodation and the smaller one is used as a workshop and storage area for vintage vehicle restoration. The surrounding plot is laid out partly to grass and partly to paved hardstanding and there is access to a large field to the southeast. Open fields surround the site to the south, east and west and the overall character of the area is rural.
4. The property lies to the southeast of a farm complex of which it was formerly part and from which it is physically and visually separated by the grassed/paved area and a boundary fence. I understand that the farm complex has been extensively refurbished and redeveloped and now includes the restored farmhouse, a number of new houses, including two under construction at the time of my visit, and some former barns converted to residential use.
5. The policies relevant in this case include policy RA.11 of the Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan 2004 (the local plan) which allows for the reuse of rural buildings for non-residential use subject to a number of criteria, but is more restrictive of use for residential purposes. Policy GP.35 relates to design and requires development to respect aspects of the site and surroundings.

6. The Council's Design Guide 2 *The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings* (adopted 1991) (the Design Guide) advises, among other things, that in order to maintain agricultural character, converted buildings should retain their open, uncluttered setting. Parking and garaging should be concealed as far as possible, using existing cart sheds, and new structures for this purpose will be resisted where suitable accommodation exists.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and discourages new development in it when it is not justified. It promotes good design in terms of the integration of individual buildings into the natural environment as well as their visual appearance and architecture.
8. The proposed three bay carriage house would be located to the west of the two converted barns near the boundary with Buckmaster Farm. I consider that, because of its location on the edge of the site and its overall size, approximately 9m x 4.8m and 4m high, it would amount to an unacceptably substantial building in this context. Although the proposed timber construction and slate roof would be appropriate in this rural setting in terms of its design and materials, its location is such that it would impinge on the open character of the surrounding countryside. I note that there are some structures to the southwest of the proposed site location on land which is part of Buckmaster Farm. These include a green house and a shed. However, they are relatively small, with a low profile, and they have little impact on the open character of the landscape.
9. I accept that the site is a historical part of the larger farm complex where new buildings have been allowed. These are grouped relatively close together within the site as a whole. The appeal site buildings are already relatively isolated from the main group and project into the countryside at the edge of the village. The proposal would result in an additional built form which would project still further and would not appear well integrated into the rural setting.
10. Conversion of the barns was permitted on the basis that the larger one was for living accommodation and the smaller one for garaging, storage and a home office. In my opinion, the appellant's use of the smaller one for uses other than that is not sufficient justification for the construction of a new building, especially as there is ample space for parking within the site.
11. The proposal would not respect the physical characteristics or natural qualities of this area of open countryside. It would introduce a new building in the countryside where such development is strictly controlled, and the re-use of rural buildings for residential rather than business purposes is only granted in exceptional circumstances in order to preserve the rural character of the countryside. It would reduce the open uncluttered setting of the existing barns.
12. I conclude that the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the rural area, contrary to policies RA.11, GP.35, the Design Guide and the guidance in the Framework.
13. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

PAG Metcalfe

INSPECTOR