

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2016

by Nick Fagan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21st December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/U1105/W/16/3156828

New House Farm, Clyst Honiton, Exeter, Devon EX5 2HS

- 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 FA & EM Hill against the decision of East Devon District Council.
 - The application Ref 15/2497/MFUL, dated 30 October 2015, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a grain storage and machinery building and associated hardstanding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a grain storage and machinery building and associated hardstanding at New House Farm, Clyst Honiton, Exeter, Devon EX5 2HS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 15/2497/MFUL, dated 30 October 2015, subject to the conditions below.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed grain store on the character and appearance of the area and whether suitable access can be provided to the site.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. New House Farm comprises an arable and beef cattle holding, 310 acres being given over to grain production. The new building would be used for cleaning, drying and storing of the grain.
 4. The main farmhouse, and rebuilt steel-framed barns following a fire in 2015, are located about ½km to the north on the top of a hill. To the north-east is another group of farm buildings at Denbow Farm. To the south, also on higher ground, is Hill Barton Business Park which comprises a number of large typical modern business units and Tarmac's Exeter concrete plant, which is clearly visible from the site.
 5. The site itself is situated at the lowest point on the farm holding, next to a dilapidated brick barn. The new building would be large: it would measure approximately 38 by 31 metres (m) in area with an eaves height of 9m and ridge height of 12.7m. But the topography rises gently up from the site such
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that the new building would be contained within what is essentially a landscaped bowl of large fields protected from wider views.

6. There would be clear views of the new store from the field gate on the road to the south east and from the surrounding higher ground but the road is the only public vantage point. The new building would in any case be seen against the backdrop of the main farm buildings on the crest of the hill from this viewpoint and, despite its size, would sit comfortably within the folds of the local landscape.
7. From the hill to the north, which is in any case a private view from the farm buildings and adjacent farmland, it would be seen below the large business units and the concrete plant at Barton Hill Business Park further to the south.
8. Although the building is large the appellant states that it is this size in order to accommodate all the necessary grain from the holding and the Council has provided no evidence to dispute this. There is no objection from the Council that the building's external facing materials would be inappropriate.
9. For these reasons I conclude that the proposed grain store is necessary for the farm business and that it would not harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore comply with Strategy 7 and Policies D1 of the recently adopted East Devon Local Plan 2013-2031(LP), which together require such agricultural development to respect the key characteristics and special qualities of the area.
10. LP Policy D7 also requires that for such development to be acceptable it must be established that there are no other suitable buildings on the holding. The replacement new buildings on the main farm site to the south are used for other purposes and are replacements of those which burnt down last year; the appellants have stated that the proposed building would in any case have been required additionally.

Access

11. The Council's second refusal reason states that insufficient information has been provided regarding access and the proposed concrete hardstanding.
12. Locating the proposed grain store nearer to the road would mean that lorries transporting the grain from the site would have to negotiate less of the farm track, which is partially surfaced with tarmac. This would seem a practical solution in addition to the building having less visual impact than if it was located on the crest of the hill next to the existing farm buildings.
13. The fact that the red line on the location and block plans only covers the site of the new building is unimportant because it is clear that the access will remain as it currently is to the farm. Likewise the block plan is clear that the concrete hardstanding would be located immediately to the north of the new building. This would be perfectly satisfactory.
14. LP Policy D7 stipulates that such new development should not lead to an unacceptable increase in traffic on the local highway network. The Council has not raised such an argument and the new grain store is only needed to deal with the farm's grain storage requirements now and in the future.

15. For these reasons I conclude that the access to the building would be satisfactory and would comply with LP Strategy 7 and Policies D1 and D7.

Conditions

16. The Council has suggested four conditions, all of which I consider to be necessary although I have slightly altered some of the wording to better comply with Planning Practice Guidance.
17. A condition listing the approved plans is necessary to provide certainty as to what has been approved. Conditions reserving specific details of external cladding materials and landscaping are required to ensure that the new building preserves the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be allowed, subject to the conditions below.

Nick Fagan

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: P515/01RevA; P515/02RevB; P515/03RevB; P515/04RevB; P515/05RevB; P515/06RevB; P515/07; & D007/16/101.
- 3) No development shall take place until samples of all external facing materials have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing. The relevant works shall be carried out in accordance with the approved sample details.
- 4) No development shall commence until there shall have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority a scheme of landscaping, such a scheme to include the planting of trees, hedges and shrubs. All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

End of Conditions