
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2017

by Roy Merrett BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X0415/W/16/3162197

Lower Weedon Hill Farm, Hyde Heath HP6 5SS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant approval required under a development order.
 - The appeal is made by Mr M Tillbrook against the decision of Chiltern District Council.
 - The application Ref CH/2016/1495/AGN, dated 8 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is an agricultural storage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and approval is granted under the provisions of Part 6 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (as amended) (GPDO) for the siting, design and external appearance of an agricultural storage building at Lower Weedon Hill Farm, Hyde Heath HP6 5SS in accordance with the terms of the application Ref CH/2016/1495/AGN dated 8 August 2016 and subject to the plans submitted with it numbered 200-01, 200-02 and 200-03. In granting approval the appellant should note that Class A of Part 6 of the GPDO requires compliance with certain conditions.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr M Tillbrook against Chiltern District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matter

3. The Council does not dispute the need for the proposed building nor its proposed siting. Accordingly there is no need to address these matters in my decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the design and external appearance of the proposed building on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and whether it represents a building designed for an agricultural purpose.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is adjacent to the eastern perimeter of a very open arable field, which has a relatively level topography with minor undulations. The field is bordered to the south and east by a dense belt of tall mature woodland.
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Footpaths pass close to the appeal site, within the open field to the north-west and the aforementioned adjacent woodland.

6. The proposed building would be relatively tall and bulky, with its L-shaped form serving to exaggerate its overall mass. However from the access road leading to the site and the aforementioned path to the north-west, the structure would be viewed against the backdrop of mature woodland which would serve to visually absorb and assimilate the structure into the wider landscape. Similarly from paths running through the adjacent woodland, views of the structure would be against the continuing woodland belt to the north or would be filtered by the presence of mature trees. Views from the road network would be from relatively long distance, where the building would appear even more recessive. Therefore in broad terms the form of the building would not appear imposing within the wider landscape.
7. The GPDO requires that the proposed building needs to be designed for agricultural purposes. In this case the structure would incorporate several large openings which would allow for convenient access to extensive internal space and manoeuvring of farm vehicles and equipment. Furthermore the presence of rooflights would provide natural light to the interior of the building.
8. The roof would incorporate hip and gable features, which with variation in the line of the eaves would add visual interest to the building, preventing it from looking excessively functional without losing its agricultural related character. The proposed external materials would comprise a combination of red brick, dark-stained weatherboarding and clay pantiles, which from my visit appeared to reflect the vernacular evident in the wider area. The use of dark, non-reflective materials would also help to mitigate the visual impact of the most prominent north and west elevations of the building. Furthermore I note that the Chilterns Conservation Board has raised no objection to the proposal.
9. I conclude that the structure would be satisfactory in terms of design and external appearance having regard to its effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and also that it would represent a building designed for agricultural purposes.
10. I do not therefore agree with the Council that the building would fail to meet the aforementioned criteria in the GPDO. Furthermore despite the Council raising concern that the appearance of the building would lend itself to domestic conversion in the future, any potential future use of the building is not a matter for consideration in this case.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, and having considered all other points raised, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Roy Merrett

INSPECTOR