
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 March 2017

by David Walker MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/W/16/3165713

Whitehall Lodge, Lower Wick, Dursley GL11 6DD

- 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 and Mrs W J Hibbs against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref S.16/2131/FUL, dated 27 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of agricultural storage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a relatively small area of undeveloped land located adjacent to a commercial yard with sizeable buildings, also in the appellants' ownership. Aside from the commercial buildings and scattered dwellings of the vicinity it is a countryside setting of open fields and hedgerows. The proposal would re-site an existing structure removed from the yard to support a new farming enterprise and its associated storage requirements.
 4. Although sharing an access with the commercial buildings the proposal would be sited in an open area. It would be separated to a degree that would have the effect of extending the massing of built form established by the existing commercial buildings into the surrounding open countryside. With a public footpath running nearby it would be readily seen from public vantage points where the industrial materials and utilitarian form of the proposed building would jar with the natural appearance of its open setting and background hedgerows.
 5. I acknowledge that external materials would be typical of other agricultural buildings and that the additional floorspace created would be only fraction of that of the commercial buildings. However, these factors would provide little mitigation for the visual impact of the development. Additionally, with only an estimated 2.5 acres of land available and limited evidence that the new farming enterprise would be delivered there is no overriding agricultural need demonstrated to outweigh the identified harm.
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6. I am satisfied, however, that with the degree of separation from the nearby Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and the intervening effect of the M5 motorway embankment, the proposal would not harm the setting of the designated area to conflict with Delivery Policy ES7 of the Stroud District Local Plan 2015 (the Local Plan).
7. Overall, the harm to the character and appearance of the area would not be outweighed by any demonstrable agricultural need. I have given consideration to the suggested conditions provided by the parties, including the scope for additional landscaping, but these would not reduce the harm to acceptable levels.
8. The proposal would therefore conflict with Delivery Policy ES12 of the Local Plan that requires the layout and design of new development to reflect a thorough understanding of the site context, amongst other matters, and criterion (1) of Core Policy CP15 of the Local Plan that requires development in the open countryside to be essential to the maintenance or enhancement of a sustainable farming or forestry enterprise.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Walker

INSPECTOR