

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 April 2017

by J A B Gresty MA MRICS

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

Decision date: 2 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/D/17/3168945

Elm Tree Barn, Hethel Road, Wreningham NR16 1BB

- 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 Simon Watkins against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/1425, dated 15 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is 2 new out buildings.
 - 1, A steel framed workshop clad in Vandyke Brown cladding with roller shutter door to east elevation.
 - 2, Oak framed lean-to building, with reclaimed pan tiled roof to match existing, brickwork plinth to match existing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for an oak framed lean-to building, with reclaimed pan tiled roof to match existing, brickwork plinth to match existing at Elm Tree Barn, Hethel Road, Wreningham NR16 1BB in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2016/1425, dated 15 June 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Block Plan, Drawing No: SW-150 External Elevations, Drawing No: SW-650 External G. A. & Drawing No: SW-650 Site Plan.
2. The appeal is dismissed with respect to a steel framed workshop clad in Vandyke Brown cladding with roller shutter door to east elevation.

Procedural Matter

3. The Council in its decision notice dated 1 September 2016 gave its approval for the proposed oak framed lean-to building and refused permission for the proposed steel framed workshop. However, whilst the Secretary of State in considering planning appeals has the option to issue a split decision, i.e. allow part and dismiss part, the same statutory powers do not exist for local planning authorities. Accordingly, notwithstanding that the appellant's grounds of appeal
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indicate that the appeal only concerns the proposed workshop, in deciding this appeal I consider both elements of the proposed development as contained in the application dated 15 June 2016.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and local area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is a small range of barns which is nearing completion as a conversion to a dwelling. The buildings are of traditional appearance with brick, flint and timber clad walls and pan tile roofs. Whilst the precise age of the barn complex is uncertain and the buildings are not listed, because of their age and appearance, the Council identifies the barn complex as a non-designated heritage asset. The appeal property is situated on the edge of a small hamlet in a rural location with open farmland to the north and east and, overall, the appearance of the appeal property complements the rural character and appearance of the area.
6. The appeal proposal includes construction of a detached, steel-framed building to the rear of a single-storey, timber clad garage building which is attached to the main dwelling. The new building would have a shallow pitched roof, a large roller shutter door and brown coloured sheet cladding. Also, it would occupy a large part of the space between the garage building and the field-side boundary of the appeal property.
7. Policy DM 3.6 of the South Norfolk Local Plan (LP) indicates that new outbuildings in a rural location should be compatible with the character and appearance of the area and setting. LP Policy DM 3.8 requires new development to respect adjoining structures and local landscape and for development to have a high standard of design, building materials and finishes which reflect local building traditions and heritage assets. As a consequence of its size and utilitarian design, the proposed workshop would appear as a very stark, industrial style building which would stand out as a large and alien feature and would be out of keeping with the character and appearance of the adjacent barn conversion, contrary to the requirements of LP Policies DM 3.6 and DM 3.8.
8. Whilst the proposed workshop would not be readily visible from nearby dwellings, or from Hethel Road, the upper parts of the building would be visible from the adjacent barn conversion and above the site's boundary hedging from the farmland to the north and east. Also, the appeal property and hamlet is visible from Wymondham Road across the fields to the north and forms part of the rural landscape. Whilst these public views are distant, the addition of an industrial style building in this location would detract from the rural setting of the settlement when viewed from the north. In this respect the proposed development would not comply with the aims of LP Policies DM 3.6 and DM 3.8.
9. The second main element of the appeal proposal is a single-storey, timber framed, lean-to structure which would adjoin the western gable end of the barn conversion. The extension would make use of traditional materials and would reflect the character and appearance of the host building. The Council does not

object to the proposed extension and I concur with the Council that it would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local area. In this respect the proposed lean-to extension would comply with the design requirements of LP Policies DM 3.6 and DM 3.8.

Other Matter

10. There are large, modern agricultural sheds visible from the appeal site. Whilst buildings of this type are common in agricultural areas, they are utilitarian in appearance and they do not provide justification for the proposed steel framed building in the location proposed.

Conclusions

11. The development scheme consists of two distinct parts which I am able to separate. Accordingly, I issue a split decision.
12. At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. In this case the proposed workshop would not reflect the character or appearance of the host property or local area. Accordingly, the proposed workshop would not represent sustainable development as sought by the Framework and, for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed with respect to the proposed workshop.
13. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed with respect to the proposed oak framed lean-to building.

Conditions

14. For the sake of clarity, I impose a condition requiring the approved development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans.

J A B Gresty

INSPECTOR