



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 July 2019

by J Hunter BA (Hons) Msc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/W/19/3224141

Grange Farm, Grange Road, Felmingham, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 0LT

- 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 Strange Farm Ltd against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref PF/18/1700, dated 6 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 14 November 2018.
 - The development proposed is conversion of barn to a dwelling (ancillary to property).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the description of development from the application form however, in the interests of brevity I have removed the reference to a previous application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposed dwelling (ancillary to property) would be an appropriate form of development in this location, having regard to local and national policies.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached barn located south west of the existing farmhouse and within a cluster of buildings associated with Grange Farm. The site is currently accessed via a courtyard off Grange Road, which leads north onto the B1145, there is an additional point of access immediately south of the appeal site.
5. It is common ground between the main parties that the appeal site lies within the open countryside, but close to the village of Felmingham. The site is physically separated from other built form as well as public services and facilities. Therefore, I am satisfied that the appeal site is in a countryside location and have determined the appeal on that basis.
6. Policy SS2 of the North Norfolk Core Strategy (NNCS) 2008 sets out the forms of development considered to be appropriate in countryside locations. This policy is consistent with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework

(the Framework) and allows for the re-use and adaptation of buildings for appropriate purposes but restricts new dwellings in the countryside. The Council's main concern is that the proposal is tantamount to a new dwelling in the countryside and thereby contrary to Policy SS2.

7. Residential accommodation in the farmhouse is approximately 20 metres north west of the appeal site. The appellant company runs a commercial interior design business from the previously converted farm buildings on site. There is a showroom/shop, carpark and various other buildings associated with the business all close to the appeal site.
8. The appellant company sets out in detail the operational side of the business and in particular the fact that clients sometimes visit the business over a number of days in order to place large or complex orders. Some clients travel long distances from within the UK or from abroad and at present are accommodated in local hotels or within the appellant's own dwelling. Acknowledging the relatively remote location of the site, hotel accommodation is some distance away and therefore the appellant company is seeking to use the proposed conversion to accommodate visitors as ancillary accommodation to the main property.
9. The proposal would re-use an existing building close to the farmhouse. In scale, it would remain subordinate to the main residence. The conversion would have one bedroom, a living area, kitchen/dining area and en-suite and as such occupancy would be limited. However, I accept that it would have all the internal facilities necessary to operate independently, even though the driveway and garden area would be shared.
10. I share the Council's view that a new dwelling would conflict with NNCS Policy SS2 and by virtue, cause harm. To overcome this harm, the appellant company suggests a planning condition linking the use of the proposed conversion to the use of the business operating from the site. I note this condition and the suggested planning condition submitted by the Council in this regard, but I do not consider that either version is sufficiently precise so that it is absolutely clear what the appellant company must do to comply with it. For example, the suggested conditions before me do not outline who, how often or for how long people may reside at the dwelling. Without such controls the dwelling could be occupied by anyone, including employees of the business and for any length of time which would run counter to the reasons why the appellant company seeks the accommodation.
11. Secondly, I have concerns about the enforceability of the suggested conditions for the same reason. Added to this, I consider that the conditions as drafted would put an undue burden on the Council to monitor the site and secondly pose an issue around detecting a contravention. The suggested conditions do not provide any suitable mechanism, such as a log book which would help in this regard.
12. Although the proposed design would have regard to local context and thus preserve the character and quality of the area in accordance with NNCS Policy EN4, I conclude that this is outweighed by my findings that the proposal would be an inappropriate form of development in this location which would be in conflict with the aims of NNCS Policy SS2; which seeks to control inappropriate forms of development within the countryside. I do not consider that this otherwise unacceptable development could be made acceptable through the

use of a planning condition as suggested by the main parties. Accordingly, for the reasons outlined above I conclude that the proposal would be an inappropriate form of development in this location.

Other Matters

13. The appellant references benefits arising from the proposed development including, the improved appearance of the conversion building and the potential economic benefits associated with the construction stage and thereafter, the long-term maintenance and upkeep of the property. Whilst I do not doubt that there would be some benefits associated with the proposal, given the scale of the proposal, these would be minor and would not outweigh the harm that I have found.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons outlined above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Julie Hunter

INSPECTOR