



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2019

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/W/19/3229830

Moreton House, Culworth, Northamptonshire OX17 2HL

- 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 Bruce Miles against the decision of South Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref S/2018/2114/FUL, dated 10 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 6 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is a garage and the change of use of site to residential.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The name of the appellant as set out in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. The appeal form gives the name of the appellant as Mr and Mrs Bruce Miles, however the right to lodge an appeal only extends to the named applicant.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised on 19 February 2019 and this post-dates the Council's refusal notice. I have considered the Framework as part of the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. Moreton House is a detached property in a small cluster of buildings set back from the road and served by a tree-lined drive. A tall hedge lies on the front and partly along the side of its garden which screens the house from the road and nearby public footpath. The area is sparsely settled, predominantly characterised by open fields set in undulating countryside.
6. The proposal would introduce a new building on land just outside the garden as defined by the hedge. The proposed building would not be seen from the road but would be viewable when approaching the appeal site along the driveway and from the public footpath. Trees on either side of the driveway would partially screen views, however it would still be visible to a degree, particularly in times of the year when the trees are without leaves. Furthermore, the site is on higher land in an open undulating landscape and so the proposed building would stand out as a prominent feature, visible from some distance.

7. By virtue of the separation distance and the intervening hedge, the proposed garage would stand out as being away from the cluster of buildings and so would appear as an intrusion into the open rural landscape. Whilst it would be of a simple style and form reflective of traditional agricultural buildings, the proposed garage would be used for residential purposes, at odds with the predominantly agricultural nature of the area. As such, the considered design of the proposed building would fail to override the harm caused to the character of the area by reason of its isolated position, prominence in a generally open landscape and the unsympathetic extension of residential land use into the countryside.
8. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, and in this regard, it would be contrary to saved policies G3, EV2 and EV7 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan 1997, policies SA, S1 and R1 of the adopted West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) 2014, the South Northamptonshire Design Guide 2017 and the Framework. All of these aim, amongst other things, to ensure development is sympathetic of local character, to protect and enhance valued landscapes and to recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Other Matters

9. Moreton House is a listed building and so I have had special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting in the assessment of this appeal. By reason of its separation distance and the intervening hedge, the proposed building would not be easily seen in the same context of Moreton House, and so the proposal would cause no harm to the setting or significance of the listed building. However, the lack of harm in this respect fails to address or outweigh my conclusions in respect of the main issue.
10. I note the appellant's need for a storage building for land maintenance equipment and cars and that the Parish Council and other consultees raise no objections to the proposal. However, such factors fail to overcome my overriding concerns relating to the main issue.

Conclusion

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

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR