
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2019

by Diane Cragg DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M2325/W/19/3229597

Smithy Farm, Fleetwood Road, Esprick, Preston PR4 3HJ

- 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 Ronald Stuart Salthouse against the decision of Fylde Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0049, dated 31 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is change of use of annex from ancillary use to that of an independent dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission granted for the change of use of annex from ancillary use to that of an independent dwelling at Smithy Farm, Fleetwood Road, Esprick, Preston PR4 3HJ in accordance with the terms of the application, ref:19/0049 dated 31 January 2019, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location plan – Scale 1:2500, supplied by 'Getmapping.com'

Site layout plan dated 9-10-2002

Plans & Elevations – submitted to support the appeal and referred to the council as being dated stamped 5 February 2019
 - 3) Before the dwelling hereby approved is brought into use details shall have been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority which make provision to enable vehicles to enter and leave the highway in a forward gear; such provisions shall be laid out in accordance with the approved details before the dwelling is occupied and thereafter maintained at all times.
 - 4) Any gates provided at the vehicular access shall be inward opening only and shall be set back a minimum of 6 metres from the back edge of the carriageway.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the occupants of the development will have adequate access to shops and services.

Reasons

3. Subject of the appeal is a single storey semi-detached structure forming part of Smithy Farm. The building was developed as an annex for the appellant's mother. The drawings show that the annex accommodation provides a single bedroom, bathroom, lounge, kitchen and utility room with separate access drive.
4. Policy H3 of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 October 2018 (Local Plan) states that conversion of existing buildings to residential use requires that careful attention should be paid to certain issues including access to the nearest services. Further, Policy INF1 of the Local Plan states that in order to protect and create sustainable communities development should a) make the most of existing infrastructure by focusing on sustainable locations with best infrastructure capacity and f) where appropriate, demonstrate how access to services will be achieved by means other than the car and, where appropriate, demonstrate how the range of local social and community services and facilities available will be suitable and accessible for the intended occupiers of the development.
5. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) at paragraph 108 and 110 (a) broadly seek to ensure that development prioritises other means of accessing facilities than the private car. Although paragraph 103 acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas.
6. During my site visit I noted the proximity of the facilities at Westholme Garage, which are approximated to be 350 metres from the appeal site. Facilities at the garage include spar shop with ATM, Gregg's bakery, coffee shop and petrol filling station. I also noted the position of a restaurant, the location of bus stops and the presence of footpaths on either side of the road with street lighting.
7. The appeal site is part of a hamlet of well-spaced ribbon development. In my estimation the facilities at the garage are within comfortable walking distance of the appeal site for the average person; although I accept that crossing the road will require care given the traffic conditions. The facilities provide a good level of the day to day requisites that one might hope to access outside a main food shopping trip, including access to a cash machine, bread and milk. There is also access to a local restaurant and coffee shop. In addition, there are buses operating along the road and, although not frequent, the evidence suggests that the buses would give a degree of choice of travel to nearby larger settlements. There is also a limited range of goods available from the farm shop adjacent to the site.
8. I am mindful that, although limited in size, the existing annex will generate some need to access local services in addition to those of the main house. I have also had regard to the wording of local and national policy wherein the Framework acknowledges that access to services will be different in urban and rural areas and, Policy INF1 requires the demonstration of alternative means of access to services 'where appropriate'.

9. Overall, I consider that the settlement has sufficient access to facilities to demonstrate that there are alternatives to the use of the private car that would be adequate to meet the needs of the future occupiers of a separate dwelling, particularly having regard to the existing annex use and its limited size. Moreover, where journeys are made by the car, as is not unusual in rural areas, the distance to the centres of Elswick, Kirkham and Wesham, which contain a range of shops and services are not excessive. Therefore, I conclude that there is no conflict with the requirements of Policies H3 and INF1 of the Fylde Local Plan to 2032 October 2018 or the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conditions

10. Conditions should be imposed to list the plans in the interests of certainty. Having regard to the status of, and traffic on, the main road it is necessary to ensure that vehicles leave the site in a forward gear. To protect the highway from obstruction it is also necessary to ensure any access gates are appropriately sited.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Diane Cragg

INSPECTOR