



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2019

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/W/19/3233419

**White Horse Stables, Road Running Through Goosey, Goosey, Faringdon
SN7 8PA**

- 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 Dan Long against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref P18/V2687/FUL, dated 24 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 19 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is conversion of stables into a dwelling and proposed changes to access for existing dwelling house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the conversion of stables into a dwelling and proposed changes to access for existing dwelling house at White Horse Stables, Road Running Through Goosey, Goosey, Faringdon SN7 8PA in accordance with application, Ref P18/V2687/FUL dated 24 October 2018 subject to the schedule of conditions at the end of this decision.

Procedural Matter

2. The Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 (2019) has been adopted since the appeal was submitted. The Council has suggested that Policy DP7 is more up to date than Policies GS6 and GS7 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (2012) referred to in the reasons for refusal. This has also been addressed by the appellant. I am therefore satisfied that my decision can be made with regard to the new policies without prejudice to any main party.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a relatively modern single storey stable block located on the edge of Goosey. The stables are arranged in a U shape constructed of predominantly rendered blockwork and partially facing brick with a central courtyard and a shallow roof. A paddock is located behind the stables. The stables are positioned behind a two storey dwelling. Sited between the stables and the dwelling is a tall timber barn. The site is served by a single access off

Goosey Lane. The property next door is set deeper into its plot with windows overlooking part of the site. The settlement comprises loose knit development with little uniformity.

5. Policy DP7 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 relates to the re-use, conversion and extension of buildings for dwellings in open countryside. The policy sets out a number of criteria for assessing the suitability of buildings for residential purposes. Part i. sets out that buildings should be of a permanent and substantial construction and capable of conversion without extensive reconstruction. Part ii. requires conversions to respect the character, appearance and setting of the original building. Part iii. requires the conversion to respect the rural landscape, character and locality and finally Part iv. sets out that where appropriate the conversion should retain any architectural or historic features.
6. From the site visit I could see that the stable block is of a permanent and substantial construction. Whilst some building work would be required to convert the stables into a dwelling in the form of a new internal wall following the line of the overhanging roof and new roof it would not in my view constitute extensive reconstruction and thus would accord with the first criteria of the policy. Indeed the proposal is supported by a Structural Survey which indicates that the building can be converted into residential use without substantial rebuilding.
7. The internal wall, insertion of doors, windows and replacement roof would be in keeping with the relatively modern appearance and scale of the building thus according with the second criteria of the policy.
8. Whilst the roof would be higher it would be viewed against a backdrop of the existing barn and dwelling, both of which would still be taller than the proposed development. Wider views including those from Goosey Lane would be localised and glimpsed due to the position of existing buildings, the distance from the highway and landscaping. As such the development would respect the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area according with the third criteria of the policy and would not have a materially greater visual impact on the surrounding countryside.
9. Taking into account the relatively modern age of the stables there are no significant architectural or historic features present that should be retained. In this regard the development would accord with the last criteria of the policy.
10. As such the development would accord with Policy DP7 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 2 (2019) and Policies CP1, CP3 and CP4 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan Part 1 (2016) which seek to secure the appropriate re-use of buildings in the countryside and the achievement of sustainable development in suitable locations that meets the housing need in the district.
11. The development includes the repositioning of the existing driveway further north. The Council indicates that this is not a matter of contention and as such I find this element acceptable also.
12. I note that the Council have made reference to a High Court judgement which considers the conversion of agricultural buildings to dwellings and the distinction between conversion and rebuilding. I have paid regard to this judgement. As I have explained above, however, and in this particular case the

internal wall and new roof would not constitute building work of such magnitude that it would be considered a rebuild. The majority of the existing building would be retained and utilised as part of the development evidenced by the Structural Survey.

Other Matters

13. I have considered the representations received in relation to the appeal. I find that there is no evidence to indicate that the development would result in harm to nearby heritage assets, due to the modest scale of the development and the intervening distance between them. Furthermore, the Council have not objected to the development on this basis.
14. In respect of location and accessibility to facilities I acknowledge that Policy CP3 of the Vale of White Horse Local Plan (2012) includes a list of towns and villages considered appropriate for new housing. The supporting text sets out that settlements not included within the list are considered to be in open countryside and will be considered against other local plan policies including DP7. There is no requirement under this policy for the re-use or conversion of buildings to be located within settlements as by their very nature some tend to be located in more remote locations.
15. The scale and mass of the alterations are appropriate and in keeping with the existing stable buildings and the surrounding area. Whilst the development would be sited on the edge of the settlement it would not result in an alien form of development, the suburbanisation of Goosey or urban sprawl as it involves the re-use of an existing building and would be well contained within its plot. Nor would it set a precedent for future development as each proposal is considered on its own merits.
16. Views of the development would be localised and contained by the position of existing buildings and landscaping and as such I find that it would not give rise to unacceptable harm to the surrounding landscape or village as I have explained. Whilst the development would result in two dwellings within close proximity to one another I do not consider that this would harm the character and appearance of the village.
17. I note that representations have been received in respect of the development impacting on the living conditions of nearby occupiers in respect of loss of light, outlook and noise. I find that the development would not severely diminish the living conditions of existing occupiers when considering the modest increase in the height of the roof and the relatively low levels of noise generated by normal residential activities. The site already experiences overlooking from the existing windows of the property next door. Whilst I accept that there would be a degree of overlooking, in this context, this would not result in significant harm to the living conditions of future occupiers given that views from ground floor windows in the property next door would be largely obscured by the existing boundary treatment and views from upper windows would be limited to a small area to the side and rear of the building.
18. It is not the purpose of the planning system to protect private views and thus I have given this negligible weight. The modest increase in the height of the roof would not create a sense of enclosure given the position of the development in relation to the next door property and the general spaciousness to the rear of the building that exists.

19. There is no evidence before me to suggest that the development would result in an increased pressure on local facilities or infrastructure through the introduction of one house in this location. Nor is there any evidence to suggest that it would harm protected species, particularly as the Countryside Officer raised no objection to the planning application.
20. Notwithstanding the representations received the highway authority has indicated that the new access would be acceptable and raised no objection to the planning application. There is no compelling evidence before me so as to lead to me a different conclusion.

Conditions

21. I have considered the imposition of conditions in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition specifying the relevant drawings as this provides certainty. A condition relating to materials is necessary in order to ensure the satisfactory appearance of the development. Details thereof would be required prior to the commencement of development given construction works would be reliant thereon. A condition relating to the laying out of the car parking areas and visibility splay are imposed in the interests of highway safety.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons set out above the appeal is allowed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR

Schedule of 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: Proposed site plan Drawing No 1401 and Proposed floor plans and elevations Drawing No 1401-3A.
- 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
- 4) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until details of a visibility splay for the proposed access have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details, prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted. The approved visibility splay shall then be retained thereafter for the life of the development.
- 5) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be first occupied until details of the parking area have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall then be carried out in accordance with the approved details, prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted.