



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2019 by S Watson BA(Hons) MSc

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/19/3234133

The Warehouse, Sunnyhill Farm, Little Horwood Road, Great Horwood MK17 0NZ

- 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 Bill Reddrop against the decision of Aylesbury Vale District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/04446/APP, dated 12 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is building operations (new doors, windows, other glazing, balconies and laying out of curtilage) necessary to support a separate request for Prior Approval under Class P permitted development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Application for Costs

3. An application for costs was made by Mr Bill Reddrop against Aylesbury Vale District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing building and its setting.

Reason for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is situated away from Little Horwood Road and is separated from it by agricultural and equestrian fields and buildings. The site is otherwise surrounded by open countryside. The appeal site itself contains a modern, corrugated metal barn which is currently used as a warehouse. By way of its design and materials it appears as a simple utilitarian building which does not appear jarring or out of keeping with the surrounding agricultural uses. To the west of the building is a concrete forecourt.

6. Prior approval has been granted for the change of use of the building to a dwellinghouse, although from my observations it appears that this use has not commenced.
7. Whilst intending to reuse the existing cladding on the walls of the building and roofing materials, the appellant is seeking to alter the external appearance of the building which has little fenestration and doors, to facilitate its residential use. In this regard, the alterations that are being proposed would significantly alter the external appearance of the building, particularly through the use of large amounts of glazing on the ends of the building, a number of new openings and the provision of glazed balconies on the north elevation. The building's appearance would change from simple and utilitarian to domestic.
8. Although the building is set back from the road and is screened to a degree by mature landscaping, glimpses of it are achieved from the access to the stable buildings. Currently the colour of the building and largely solid elevations assist it in assimilating with the rural landscape. The introduction of a large amount of glazing at first floor level on the north elevation in particular, the glazed balcony area, and numerous windows on the west elevation would increase the prominence of the building in the landscape, particularly when lights were on within the rooms that the windows serve. The changes to its appearance would have a harmful impact on the otherwise pleasant rural, equestrian and agricultural character of its surroundings.
9. The appellant has referred me to a Dutch barn which was granted planning permission by the Council. This building was of a different design to the one before me, being open on one side. I acknowledge that large areas of glazing have been incorporated into the design of this building as well as new windows, however without understanding the context of the building within the landscape I am unable to ascertain whether it is directly comparable to the scheme before me. Accordingly, limited weight is given to this matter in my consideration of this appeal which has been assessed on its merits.
10. It is submitted that the proposed alterations are necessary to provide an outlook to the intended future occupiers of the new dwelling as well as improving light levels within the building. I acknowledge that the existing openings within the building would be unlikely to provide a high quality internal living environment and that additional openings would need to be created to achieve a high standard of amenity for future users of the new dwelling. However, it is likely that a different design solution could achieve this which would respect the character and appearance of the host building and the local area. The scheme before me is unlikely to be the only solution to achieve acceptable levels of light and outlook.
11. It has been brought to my attention that under permitted development rights the appellant could significantly extend the existing building under Class H of the *Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015*, and that this extension could appear similar to the proposal before me. As I have not been provided with detailed drawings of the extension, I am not able to assess the impact of such a development against the proposal before me. As such this matter carries only limited weight in my overall consideration.
12. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the host building in conflict with Policy GP.35 of

the *Aylesbury Vale District Local Plan Written Statement: Part 1* (AVDLP), and Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework), which amongst other things requires development to respect and complement the physical character of the site and its surroundings, and is of good design which adds to the overall quality of the area. Although the principle of the use of the building is not before me, AVDLP Policy RA.11 is relevant in so far as it requires conversion works to respect the character of the building and its setting. The proposal would not achieve this and thus there is also conflict with this policy.

13. The Council's decision notice refers to the Design Guide 2: The Conversion of Traditional Farm Buildings. Given that the warehouse is not of a historic traditional design I consider that this guidance is not directly relevant to my consideration of the appeal proposal.

Conclusion and Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Watson

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and concur that the appeal should be dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR