
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 February 2020

by S Tudhope LLB (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/19/3236570

Briar House, Church Lane, Lound NR32 5LL

- 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 John Holmes against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/19/2410/FUL, dated 17 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 31 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing garage to an annex.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Policy WLP8.10 of the East Suffolk Council - Waveney Local Plan 2019 (LP) is supportive of the provision of residential annexes in the countryside. This includes the conversion of a 'suitable existing detached outbuilding within the curtilage' of the original dwelling. The policy does not specifically define 'suitable' but does require that residential annexes must be designed to reflect the character and setting of the original dwelling and that the size, scale, design, location and provision of accommodation must be subordinate to its host.
4. The host property is a substantial, part single-storey and part two-storey detached modern dwelling, located within an area of generally open countryside. The dwelling is set towards the rear of its large plot. The appeal building is one of two detached brick-built garages and is positioned to the side and forward of the front elevation of the dwelling and the other garage. A driveway dissects the site leading to the garages and turns in front of the dwelling. A farm complex is situated to the rear of the site with its access running alongside the eastern boundary of the appeal site.
5. The conversion of the appeal building would result in an increase in its height to accommodate a first floor to provide two bedrooms. Dormer windows are proposed and a porch to the eastern elevation. Other alterations are proposed for the removal of garage doors and the installation of patio doors and other fenestration.

6. Although views of the appeal building from the surrounding area are somewhat limited, due to the screening provided by existing roadside and boundary hedging, it is nevertheless currently seen as an outbuilding within the garden of the existing dwelling. The alterations proposed would result in a building that is significantly more prominent within its surroundings. It would have the appearance of a separate dwelling rather than an annexe. This would be exacerbated by the proposed orientation of the internal layout of the annexe, whereby its front elevation would face the eastern side boundary of the site rather than toward the host property. This would suggest separation from, rather than an ancillary relationship with, the main dwelling. I do not consider the proposed annexe would appear subservient to the main house.
7. That being the case, whilst the ancillary nature of the proposed use could be secured by the imposition of a suitably worded condition, the proposed annexe would nevertheless relate poorly to the main house in terms of its position, scale and design. The character of the site would unacceptably alter from that of a rural dwelling with outbuildings to two dwellings sharing an access. This increased urbanisation would be harmful to the rural character and appearance of the area. This would be the case even with no changes being proposed to the boundaries of the site.
8. I have taken into consideration the appellant's assertions that the provision of an annexe would allow 'clubbing together' for a family to be able to climb the property ladder, to share household costs and to provide care in the form of babysitting or assisting elderly relatives. However, I do not consider that such matters outweigh the harm identified above.
9. I conclude, therefore, that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area. Thus, it would be contrary to LP Policy WLP8.10.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

S Tudhope
Inspector