



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 May 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/W/19/3241826

Home Farm, Manor Lane, Bredon's Norton, GL20 7EZ

- 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 M. Meadows against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00947/FUL, dated 16 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is change of use of first floor farm shop storage space associated with Meadows Farm Shop to residential unit.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use of first floor farm shop storage space associated with Meadows Farm Shop to residential unit, at Home Farm, Manor Lane, Bredon's Norton, GL20 7EZ in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref: 19/00947/FUL, dated 16 April 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached Schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the development is amended from the original application for planning permission. The new description was agreed by both parties and re-advertised as such.
3. An additional plan (HFBC/04C) was submitted at the appeal stage. This replicates information that can be found in the other plans, so I have accepted it.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would represent an acceptable form of development, having regard to local planning policy
 - Whether there are material considerations to justify a determination other than in accordance with the development plan.

Reasons

5. It is proposed to convert the top floor of a two-storey brick barn into a two-bedroom dwelling for selling on the open market. The ground floor is currently in use as a farm shop. The upper floor, although nominally for 'storage', was

observed during the site visit to have been unused for a long time. Home Farm is situated on the edge of Bredon's Norton village in close proximity to other houses, the village hall and church. The larger village of Bredon is approximately 2 km distant, which provides wider facilities and transport links.

6. The site lies outside Bredon Norton's development boundary and is therefore in 'open countryside'. Policy SWDP2(C) of the South Worcestershire Development Plan, February 2016 (SWDP) requires that development in the countryside be limited to specific exceptions, none of which apply in this case. A proposal for open market housing beyond the development boundary of the village is therefore in conflict with Policy SWDP2. I now consider whether there are other material considerations weighing in favour of allowing the appeal.
7. The appellant has suggested that the storage space will remain unused and I have therefore considered whether it is appropriate that potential benefits of re-using a redundant building are included in the planning balance. Policy SWDP12 refers to re-use of agricultural buildings in specific circumstances, which do not apply here, and does not identify any potential benefit from re-use of underutilised existing structures in principle. However, there is support from the thrust of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) to consider the potential benefit of re-using redundant, under-utilised or unused buildings more widely, including in the countryside
8. The appellants manage a working farm, a shop which has recently downsized and have previously run a B&B and holiday let. Despite these enterprises, the storage space has remained unused. I am therefore satisfied that this part of the building is likely to remain redundant for the foreseeable future, resulting in space being wasted, in conflict with national policies.
9. The intention of Policy SWDP2(C) is to protect the high quality of the countryside, direct most development to accessible locations and to support specific rural objectives. The main development would be within an existing building requiring no significant external changes and there would be no extension of the built-up area. The location is near village facilities and those in the larger village of Bredon are easily reached. On this basis I am satisfied there would not be harm to the quality of the countryside and I do not consider the location to be harmfully inaccessible.

Other Matters

10. I have noted discussion between both parties regarding emerging development plan policies SWDPR23 regarding re-use of agricultural buildings and SWDPR11 regarding employment in rural areas. However, the emerging plan is at an early stage and I have therefore not taken them into account.

Conclusion

11. The proposal conflicts with Policy SWDP2 but there are other material considerations that warrant allowing the appeal in this instance. Based on the Framework I conclude that it is appropriate to account for the wider benefits of bringing redundant space back into use and given the specific circumstances of this case, I have given this factor substantial weight. For this reason, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed subject to the conditions below.

Conditions

12. The Council requests that five conditions be imposed. In addition to the statutory time limit (1), Condition (2) references plans in the interests of certainty (2). I have added Condition (3) requiring submission of details regarding finishing materials, because I am not satisfied that these are secured via the plans or application forms before me. Condition (4) is necessary to protect local amenities during construction. Condition (5) is necessary to ensure that a sustainable drainage system is provided in the interests of the local environment. I have not imposed a condition to protect the privacy of neighbours given that the window is at a low height within the room, which limits the risk from overlooking.

B Davies

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the application form and drawing numbers HFBC/01, HFBC/02, HFBC/03, HFBC/04C, HFBC/05B and HFBC/06A.
- 3) No development shall commence until details of the materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the structure 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) Demolition, clearance or construction work and deliveries to and from the site in connection with the development hereby approved shall only take place between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 Monday to Friday and 08.00 and 13.00 on a Saturday and at no other times. There shall be no demolition, clearance or construction work or deliveries to and from the site on Sundays or Bank Holidays.
- 5) Prior to the occupation of the development hereby permitted, the details set out in the submitted Water Management Statement shall be fully implemented and remain thereafter.