



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2020

by B Davies MSc FGS CGeol

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/20/3250167

**Cloister Stables, Cloister Road, Winterbourne, Winterbourne Down,
Gloucestershire, BS36 1LL**

- 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 Messrs Drew & Pickett against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P20/00547/F, dated 6 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing stables and related outbuilding and erection of 1 No replacement dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The appeal site is located within an area of Green Belt. Accordingly, the main issues are:
 - Whether or not the proposed development would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and development plan policy;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
 - Whether the appeal site is suitably located for a new dwelling having regard to local and national planning policy; and
 - If the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm to the Green Belt by way of inappropriateness and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify it.

Reasons

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt

3. The site is in the Bristol and Bath Green Belt and it is not in dispute that it is previously developed land. Paragraph 145 g) of the Framework allows for

redevelopment of such land if it does not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development.

Openness

4. The current ground surface is mainly hard core, with a stone and hedge boundary to the west, but otherwise post and rail fenced. The proposal seeks to entirely cover the yard and driveway in tarmac, which would inevitably attract domestic paraphernalia, such as a washing line and planted areas. This would constitute an intensification of development that would reduce the openness to a modest extent given that land has previously been developed.
5. The existing stables are offset from each other and separated by a gap. These would be replaced with a single building, which although of slightly smaller footprint overall, would appear as a longer, more substantial front and rear elevation than that existing. The current partly pitched roof would be infilled with a single roofline, albeit slightly lower than that existing, and a 2 m high timber fence is proposed around a significant proportion of the site boundary. Both structures would contribute to a moderate reduction in the openness of the area.

Conclusion on whether the proposal would be inappropriate development

6. I find that the proposal would have a greater impact on the openness of the Green Belt than the existing development and would therefore constitute inappropriate development. This would be in conflict with Policy CS5 and CS34 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy (adopted 2013)(CS) and PSP7 of the South Gloucestershire Policies Sites and Places Plan (adopted 2017)(PSPP), which together require that proposals in the Green Belt are not inappropriate and comply with the Framework. The impact on openness may be localised and limited, but it still constitutes harm to the Green Belt and substantial weight must be given to this.

Character and appearance

7. The wooden and corrugated iron stable blocks, open fencing and non-uniform hardcore surface contribute to the rural nature of this side of Cloister Road. There are houses opposite, but these are physically and visually separate, and the site reads as part of the rural landscape. Although the proposed building would be of simple form and there would be few windows when viewed from the public domain, it would appear as a domestic property through addition of a driveway, fencing and addition of external domestic paraphernalia. This would not protect the character of the rural landscape
8. The proposed structure would be a block-like building, with scant fenestration on 3 sides, a rendered exterior and zinc sheeted roof, and a significant proportion of the site would be covered in tarmac. The form and materials proposed do not reflect the appearance of other development in the area and would not comprise high quality design for residential purposes.
9. The proposal would therefore be in conflict with Policies CS1 of the CS, and PSP1 and PSP2 of the PSPP, which aim to secure the highest possible standards of design to protect character and landscape, including reflection of local distinctiveness.

Suitability of the location in the open countryside

10. The location does not meet any of the exceptions for residential development in the open countryside listed in Policy PSP40 of the PSPP or Policy CS5 of the CS. I do not consider that it would read as a natural extension to the settlement boundary because there are no other residential properties on this side of the road, which demarcates a clear separation in character between the rural and residential areas. The proposal is therefore in conflict with local policies intended to protect the countryside from inappropriate intrusion.

Other matters

11. There would be benefits from increasing housing supply and the contribution this would bring to the local economy, but as this is only a single dwelling these benefits would be modest.
12. I note that a third party raises the potential benefit provided by the opportunity for local people to stay in the village, and while I am sympathetic to the argument, there is nothing before me to suggest that the property would be retained for that purpose.
13. I note the efforts of the appellant to address the reasons for dismissal in a previous appeal at the site¹, including reducing the height and footprint of the building, and re-configuring the main amenity area and fenestration. Although the potential harm may have been reduced through these endeavours, for the reasons above the proposal would still be in harmful conflict with local and national policies.
14. The nearby site of Hope Road, Iron Acton² is part of a small cluster of other buildings, including houses and is not easily visible from the public domain. For both these reasons, I do not consider the sites comparable. Each planning application and appeal is determined on its individual merits.

Conclusions

15. The development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt because it would have a greater impact on openness than the existing site, an effect which in itself would be harmful, and this is a matter that carries substantial weight. I have also found that there would be conflict with local policies for location of housing in the open countryside, and harm to the character and appearance of the area and landscape. These conflicts with the local development plan add considerable weight to the harm already identified.
16. The benefits of the scheme would be limited, and these do not outweigh the harm that would be caused. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist.
17. For the reasons above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Davies

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/P0119/W/19/3229608 (September 2019)

² PK18/3916/F