
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2020

by S Shapland BSc (Hons) MSc CMILT MCIHT

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/D/20/3251166

1 Weston Farm Cottages, Lambourn Road, Weston, Newbury RG20 8JA

- 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 Henry Burgoyne-Probyn against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02950/HOUSE, dated 27 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 27 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is 3 bay garage with home office and storage rooms above.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

3. The appeal site forms the large rear garden area of one half of a pair of semi detached cottages within the village of Weston. The village is located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Adjacent to the appeal site is Weston Court, which comprises a number of employment uses. Access to the site is via a shared access road, which runs alongside the appeal site and provides access to a farm.
4. The characteristic of Weston is rural in its nature, with properties of a mix of design styles set out in a linear fashion along the highway. They are generally set in large verdant plots, with development on this side of the road backing onto large open fields. The village of Weston does not have a settlement boundary, and is therefore within the open countryside.
5. The appeal proposal is for the construction of a detached garage which would be finished in red brick and flint, with a clay tile roof. Above the garage is proposed a large storage and workshop area, with the plans indicating a small toilet. Access to the first floor area would be via an external staircase.
6. The proposed garage is a substantial outbuilding, and would have a ridge height of approximately 6.4 metres. The total floorspace would be approximately 55sqm. The proposal would represent a development of significant scale in this rear garden. The design of the garage with its first floor

- fenestrations and hipped roof would give it the appearance of a new dwelling, and combined with the height and bulk would appear overly dominate in this rear garden space.
7. The garage would be located approximately 9 metres from the existing dwelling. I recognise that both the height and floorspace of the proposal would be less than the existing dwelling. However, this would not be of a degree which I consider would mean the detached garage would appear as subservient to the existing dwelling. The design and scale would mean it would compete visually with the existing dwelling and would appear as unsympathetic development in this rural location.
 8. I appreciate that the proposal would be finished in materials which would complement the existing dwelling. Furthermore, the proposal would be located back from the existing highway, and thus it would not be overly prominent from the main road. However, it would still be visible from the neighbouring development of Weston Court, as well as No.2 Weston Farm Cottage. It would also be noticeable from the access road which serves the farm behind the appeal site. Consequently, I consider that the scale of the proposal means it would harm the character and appearance of the area.
 9. As the appeal site is located within an AONB, Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that I have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of AONB's. Furthermore, Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) specifies that great weight must be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty of these areas.
 10. Whilst I have found that the appeal proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, the site is relatively well contained within an existing residential garden. As such the impact of the proposal would be localised to the vicinity of the appeal site and would not harm the wider AONB. As such the proposal would conserve the beauty of the AONB and does not conflict with Policy ADPP5 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (CS) or paragraph 172 of the Framework.
 11. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with policies ADPP1, CS14 and CS19 of the CS. Together these policies seek, amongst other things, that development is of a high quality design, which is appropriate in terms of its design and context of the sites character.
 12. I note that the appellants desire to utilise the building for home working, and recognise their comments in respect of this reducing the need to travel and commute to a workplace. Whilst this is noted, this minor benefit in favour of the proposal does not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance I have identified above. The lack of objections from the neighbouring occupiers at Weston Court and No.2 Weston Farm Cottage does not outweigh the harm I have identified to the character and appearance.
 13. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

S Shapland

INSPECTOR