
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 September 2020

by Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/W/20/3255106

Home Farm, Little Dasset, nr Northend, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 2TX

- 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 Peter Taylor against the decision of Stratford on Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03307/FUL, dated 14 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 29 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is change of use of 2 holiday let house into full time lets.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. The barn the subject of this appeal was converted in 2014. The associated approval included a condition that limited its use to holiday lets only. The application form explains that the conversion work was completed in September 2019. However, the appellant states that the units have been rented as long term lets. Accordingly, the Council remark that the current proposal has already been implemented. I have considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the appeal site offers a suitable location for new housing development having regard to national and local spatial housing policies.

Reasons

4. The development plan for the district includes the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy 2011-2031 (2016) (CS). Policy CS.15 of the CS seeks to direct residential development into a hierarchy of settlements, that is broadly based on the level of services provided and their capacity to support new residential development. Consequently, most new housing is directed towards the main town of Stratford-Upon-Avon, main rural centres and two new settlements.
5. Policy AS.10 of the CS limits residential development in the countryside at sections (d) to (j). These include support for residential conversions of brick or stone buildings that are of historic interest, when ancillary to an existing business, would consist of a replacement dwelling, would remove a bad-neighbour use, include the expansion of mobile home parks, be for agricultural

worker's dwellings or be a dwelling of exceptional quality. In terms of spatial strategy, the aims of Policies CS.15 and AS.10 are therefore generally consistent with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

6. The appeal site is located to the front of a small cluster of buildings including a farmhouse, barns and other small outbuildings. There are also two dwellings located opposite the site. The site is on a small approach road leading to the Country Park and opposite the junction to Northend. The barn is therefore not isolated but is within the open countryside beyond a settlement boundary.
7. Paragraphs 77-78 of the Framework seek to encourage development in rural areas that would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It supports development in villages that would allow them to grow and thrive, especially where it would support local services. It also recognises that development in one village may support another nearby settlement. The village of Northend is relatively small and provides very limited goods or services. Gaydon, a larger nearby centre, includes a wider range of employment opportunities and services. However, being some distance from Northend, and further still from larger towns, it is unlikely that the proposal would materially support the vitality of local settlements. Also, the adjacent highway does not include footpaths or streetlights. This would deter its use by pedestrians and cyclists. As future occupiers of the proposal would have to travel a substantial distance to access goods and services the majority of trips would be likely to be car borne. The proposal would thus result in the creation of a residential use with poor accessibility.
8. The Council approved the conversion of the barn in 2014 as this would support local tourism. Such a use is not as reliant on frequent and sustained access to goods and services as a residential use. Policy CS.22 of the CS requires existing employment sites, and unimplemented approved employment uses, to only be redeveloped if the business would be no longer viable or appropriate. The submitted evidence does not explain or detail the viability of the approved use. Instead, the appellant offers that a residential use would command a greater yield. This approach would not satisfy the requirements of the policy which would need instead to be addressed with the rigour of a suitable financial appraisal after the business was operational. Furthermore, there is nothing compelling in the evidence to suggest that the converted barn would be inappropriate for tourism use. In contrast, it seems to me to be well located for occupiers to benefit from the beauty of the local area.
9. Therefore, the proposal would not offer a suitable location for new housing development having regard to national and local spatial housing policies. Subsequently, the proposal would conflict with Policies CS.15, AS.10 and CS.22 of the CS. These require residential development to be in accordance with the spatial strategy, to discourage development in the open countryside unless it would meet set criteria and for the loss of a business use to be justified.

Other matters

10. The appellant refers to the fall-back position conveyed by permitted development rights. However, the Prior Approval procedure cannot be applied to works already undertaken and only relates to barns in agricultural use. This is therefore of limited weight in consideration of the merits of the proposal.

11. Chapel Barn is a Grade II listed building located close to the site's frontage. Its significance derives from its architectural interest and simple rural vernacular. The Old Chapel and Priests House is also a scheduled ancient monument. Due to the nature of the proposal and distance from these assets their settings would be preserved.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

Ben Plenty

INSPECTOR