



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 September 2020

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3115/W/20/3254292

Land at Salt Lane, Postcombe OX9 7EE

- 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 William Browning against the decision of South Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref P20/S0617/PIP, dated 29 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is four bedroom house and double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background

2. The appeal application is for permission in principle, as provided for in the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)¹ advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development which separates the consideration of matters of principle from the technical detail. Planning permission does not exist unless both the permission in principle and the technical details are approved. This appeal relates to the first of these two stages.
3. The PPG sets out that the scope of permission in principle applications is limited to location, land use and amount of development. In respect of residential development, an applicant can apply for permission in principle for a range of dwellings by expressing a minimum and maximum net number of dwellings as part of the application.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises part of an agricultural field that neighbours a large agricultural building and yard. The village is predominantly linear with existing development along London Road and extending for a short distance along Salt

¹ Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 58-001-20180615

- Lane. Whilst the M40 borders one side of the site its open nature contributes to the verdant and rural character of the immediate area.
6. Notwithstanding the presence of housing opposite the site and the neighbouring agricultural building, the site is not a small gap located within an otherwise uninterrupted built up frontage but rather an agricultural field located on the edge of a village. Nor does the site have the characteristics of an obvious vacant plot. The proposal would not integrate into an established street scene due to the substantial separation between houses along this side of Salt Lane and the agricultural building. Consequently, it does not constitute limited infill in a village.
 7. Whilst the proposed development would be close to and in line with the agricultural building it would not successfully integrate into the landscape. Notwithstanding its proposed height it would be very apparent and intrusive appearing as an incongruous form of development that would change the verdant appearance of the site into something more urban.
 8. The urbanisation of the site through the introduction of built form, associated infrastructure and domestic paraphernalia would significantly erode its verdant and rural appearance. I acknowledge that the application was submitted in principle form, however, there is no evidence to indicate that a scheme appropriate to its context could be secured at technical details stage.
 9. The proposal may reduce the need to travel from the appellant's current home to the farm and local schools. However, this would not outweigh the harm that I have identified in relation to the main issue. Moreover, this harm could not be mitigated through the imposition of conditions including conditions tying the proposal to the farm, materials, design or landscaping.
 10. I find no substantive evidence before me to indicate that the proposed development is necessary to operate the business, prevent rural crime or to protect livestock and farm equipment.
 11. I conclude that the proposed development would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. This would be contrary to Policies CS1, CSR1, CSEN1 and CSS1 of the South Oxfordshire Core Strategy (2012) which, amongst other things, seek to protect local character and distinctiveness; protect the district's distinct landscape character from inappropriate development and support other villages.
 12. It would be contrary to saved Policies G2, G4, C4 and H4(iii) of the South Oxfordshire Local Plan (2011) which, amongst other things, seek to protect the district's countryside, settlements and environmental resources from adverse developments; not to permit development that would damage the attractive landscape setting of settlements and ensuring that proposals for housing do not adversely affect the character of the area. It would also be contrary to the aims and objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

13. The extent of the appellant's land ownership and the lack of objection from the parish council, consultees and local residents weighs neither for nor against the proposed development and does not lead me to reach a different conclusion.

14. Reference has been made to housing developments in nearby settlements. However, I have not been made aware of the individual circumstances behind them being built out. In any event every appeal must be considered on its own merits.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above the appeal does not succeed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR