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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2020 by Darren Ellis MPlan

**Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

**Decision date: 15 January 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/F2415/W/20/3258048**

**Former Grain Dryer Buildings and Paddock, Walton Holt Farm,  
Bosworth Road, North Kilworth, Leicestershire, LE17 6NT**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr R A Price against the decision of Harborough District Council.
  - The application Ref 20/00636/FUL, dated 21 April 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 June 2020.
  - The development proposed is the conversion of existing agricultural buildings to residential use including access and parking arrangements.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

### Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the proposal constitutes the conversion of the existing buildings for the purposes of national and local planning policies, and the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the countryside.

### Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site consists of three disused former agricultural buildings located in a field off Bosworth Road. The existing buildings are in poor condition and comprise a tall square shaped building previously thought to be used for drying grain, a single-storey brick barn, and a single-storey building adjacent to the road. The proposal seeks permission for the conversion of these buildings to four dwellinghouses.
5. Previous applications under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class Q of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) for the conversion of two of the buildings into three dwellings were refused<sup>1</sup>. The second proposal was subsequently dismissed at appeal<sup>2</sup>, on the grounds that the extensive works proposed did not fall within the limitations of Class Q for permitted development.

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<sup>1</sup> Planning application refs. 19/00298/PDN & 19/01505/PDN

<sup>2</sup> Appeal ref. APP/F2415/W/19/3241580

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6. The appeal site is in a countryside location. Policy GD3 of the Harborough Local Plan 2011-2031 (adopted April 2019) (LP) sets out various circumstances where development in the countryside will be permitted, including (f) rural housing in accordance with policy GD4 of the LP and (g) the conversion or re-use of permanent and substantial buildings. Policy GD4(c) states that residential development in the countryside will be permitted where it is for the re-use of redundant or disused buildings that results in enhancement to their immediate setting.
7. The reports of structural surveys for the existing buildings declare that the buildings are fit for conversion to residential accommodation subject to the works recommended in the reports being carried out. These works include underpinning and new foundations, replacement and additional purlins, the replacement of steel beams and columns, major repairs to or the replacement of the roofs, and the erection of reinforced brick piers to prop up the external walls. Some of these are structural rather than minor works and, in combination with the other works listed in the reports, go considerably beyond what could be deemed as reasonable for the conversion of the buildings to dwellinghouses, for the purposes of national and local planning policies. Accordingly, whilst I acknowledge that the buildings are currently disused, I am unconvinced on the basis of the evidence before me that the proposal constitutes the re-use of the buildings for planning purposes.
8. The appellant states that significant amounts of the work would represent repairs that could be carried out to the buildings without requiring planning permission, as they would be reasonably necessary for agricultural operations on the site should these recommence. However, no substantive details have been provided of all of the works this statement refers to, nor of the likelihood of agricultural operations recommencing on the site.
9. Furthermore, even if the works were deemed to constitute a conversion of the buildings, this proposal would see a large increase in the number of openings for doors, windows and rooflights in the buildings, and some of the existing openings would be blocked up. Accordingly, the appearance of the buildings would be substantially altered. An expanse of hard landscaping would also be provided for vehicular access and parking which would have an urbanising effect on the site. Consequently, the proposal would erode the rural and agricultural character of the countryside. Moreover, the proposal would fail to enhance the immediate setting of the appeal site and therefore would not satisfy the requirements of criteria (c) of Policy GD4.
10. For these reasons, the proposal would conflict with Policies GD3 and GD4 of the LP. The proposal would also fail to accord with Policy GD8 of the LP, which requires development to respect and enhance the local character and to integrate as far as possible into the existing built form.

#### *Other Matters*

11. I acknowledge that the buildings are currently in a poor condition in visual terms and that the grain store has some limited merit in terms of its history. In addition, the provision of four additional housing units would make a limited meaningful difference to the housing supply of the area. There would be a small social benefit in providing four extra units, and economic advantages would also arise from the construction and occupation of the new houses and

future Council tax receipts. However, these benefits are significantly outweighed by the harm identified above.

**Conclusion**

12. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

*D Ellis*

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

**Inspector's Decision**

13. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

*S Ashworth*

INSPECTOR