
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2020

by Stephen Wilkinson BA BPI DIP LA MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/20/3256147

Bryerley Springs Farm, Galley Lane, Great Brickhill, Buckinghamshire MK17 9AA

- 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 Brian Rumbold against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref; 19/04314/APP, dated 6 December 2019 was refused by notice dated 1 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is conversion of stables to a 2 bed flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The appeal raises 2 issues:
 - Whether or not the appeal site is suitable for conversion to residential purposes, and
 - Whether or not the location of the proposal is acceptable having regard to both national and local policies.

Procedural Matters

3. On 1 April 2020 Aylesbury Vale District Council merged with other local planning authorities into a new unitary authority, Buckinghamshire Council. While the original application was submitted to Aylesbury Vale District Council the decision was issued by Buckinghamshire Council. I have amended the banner heading accordingly.
4. At the time of writing this decision, consultation is underway into proposed Modifications into the Council's emerging plan, the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033. Both parties accord the policies identified in the Councils decision 'moderate' weight with the exception of Policy S1 being accorded 'considerable' weight.

Reasons

Conversion of the existing building

5. The appeal site comprises part of a stable block which is one of a series of buildings in an equestrian centre, surrounded by open countryside.

6. Conversion works appear to have been completed. Externally, the works involve a front extension, timber cladding to its elevations and the creation of a limited area of private amenity space at the front.
7. The appellant has stated that the stables have become redundant given changes to working practices involved in the management of the centre involving the stabling of horses in open yards. As evidence, in support of these changes, the appellant has identified the recent permissions granted by the Council for open yards. Whilst I do not accept that the Council, in granting permission for these yards, explicitly knew or accepted that the existing stables were redundant, it is accepted that their use is a reflection of the current operational management of the centre.
8. The Council indicates that the nature of the equestrian business would continue to require the retention of stables to allow care for horses when they fall ill and during birthing. Whilst a number of stables will still be retained for these purposes within the centre, I regard this as a matter for the appellant, given their management operations. Future development proposals seeking additional stables would still require a decision on an application for planning permission.
9. Emerging policy BE2 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan, identifies closely with Saved Policy GP35 in requiring extensions to be of good design and to respect its surroundings. In the context of the centre's yard and the utilitarian nature of surrounding buildings the works are considered acceptable.
10. Emerging Policy C1 introduces a broad range of criteria which conversion schemes are required to meet. Whilst not all of these are directly relevant to the issues raised by the appeal scheme, I consider that the proposal does not conflict with C1 b), d), h), i) and j)¹. Given the original size of the appeal site, the works involved in this conversion would not be significant, the redundant status of the building has been demonstrated and the impacts of the conversion would not have an adverse impact on its surroundings.
11. Having considered the rationale for the proposed loss of the stables, the extent of works and the scheme design, I conclude that the building is suitable for conversion. The proposal does not conflict with Saved policies RA11 and GP35 and the emerging policies BE2 and C1 (as identified above) of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033.

Location of proposed development

12. Both parties acknowledge that the location of the appeal site would mean that access would primarily be by private transport. The appellant states that the previous use of the site as stables, would have involved regular trips by private transport by livery customers and vets.
13. Whilst no figures have been provided on the levels of trip generation associated with the use of the site as stables compared to those generated by the appeal scheme, it is likely that there would be a modest increase, as the appeal scheme is for a 2 bed or family sized unit. Trips generated by the livery stable would depend largely on its management. In comparison, trips generated for a new dwelling would involve a regular daily pattern of movement, resulting from trips to work, school and for access to services. Although services exist in the

¹ These references were taken from the policy draft submitted with the appeal which had been amended

local centres in Great Brickhill and Bletchley, access would still be dependent on the use of private transport.

14. Whilst the Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between rural and urban areas the Council has a 5 year supply of housing,² and the need for additional housing in a location outside settlements is unnecessary. The issues in this appeal can be distinguished from those identified in the appeal decision³ cited by the appellant, as the adopted Framework places a clearer emphasis on sustainable transport solutions than the previous Framework.
15. Policy S1 of the emerging Local Plan is accorded considerable weight by both parties. This re-iterates the principle of sustainable development which underpins the Framework. Other policies referred to by the Council in its second reason for refusal seek to maintain a settlement hierarchy and support sustainable transport. These are accorded moderate weight by the parties.
16. Given the state of progress of the emerging plan, I accord significant weight to the degree of conflict between the appeal scheme and policy S1 and moderate weight to the conflict with the other emerging policies. I conclude that, when taken as a whole, the appeal scheme would conflict with emerging policies S1, S3, T1 and D4 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2013-2033 and those in the Framework which seek to ensure that new development is appropriately located.

Conclusion

17. Whilst the conversion of the building is acceptable, the determining issue in this appeal, is the location of the site, which results in over reliance on private transport. Marginal economic benefits may have arisen from the site's conversion but these are outweighed by disbenefits which arise from the site's location which would result in trip generation by private car. Whilst there is a fine balance of policies involved in this appeal, I conclude that when taken as a whole, the appeal scheme would be in conflict with the emerging policies and those of the Framework which require that new development is appropriately located.
18. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Stephen Wilkinson

INSPECTOR

² Five Year Housing Land Supply Position 2019

³ APP/K0235/W/15/3087254