
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 January 2021

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DMS DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/20/3255123

Hill Farm Cottage, Englishes Lane, Ilketshall St John, Suffolk NR34 8JE

- 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 Ron Makie against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/20/1300/FUL, dated 24 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is sub-division of existing residential property including conversion of existing outbuilding to form a separate dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the nature and location of the residential development proposed would be appropriate with regard to local and national planning policies.

Reasons

3. The host property is a relatively isolated dwelling in the countryside, quite remote from any settlement. Approval to convert an existing outbuilding to form a separate one-bedroom dwelling was granted quite recently on appeal¹. This current scheme differs from that allowed by including an extension to the outbuilding and thus providing for a larger, two-bedroom dwelling.
4. The previous appeal decision is a material consideration. Development plan policy remains the same in that policies WLP1.1 and WLP1.2 of the East Suffolk Council Waveney Local Plan 2019 (LP) restrict development in the countryside except where other policies might indicate otherwise. LP Policy WLP8.11 allows for the conversion of rural buildings to residential use, provided certain criteria are met. One of these is that the building be locally distinctive and of architectural merit. The previous Inspector found this requirement more restrictive than that of paragraph 79 c) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The latter would allow for an isolated home in the countryside where simply resulting from the re-use of a redundant or disused building and enhancing its immediate setting.
5. My colleague found the outbuilding to contribute positively to the rural character of the area and of some architectural merit. As minimal alterations were proposed to the outbuilding's appearance and the removal of non-native

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/19/3232531 - decision dated 25 November 2019.

evergreen frontage hedging would enhance the immediate setting, the Inspector considered the support granted under Framework paragraph 79 c) outweighed the conflict with LP policy.

6. However, development plan policy must remain the starting point for my considerations in this subsequent appeal. The extension proposed would lead to a significant increase in volume, creating what would appear as a bungalow rather than a former outbuilding. This would no longer be a minimal alteration nor maintain or enhance the structure, form and character of the rural building, which are both requirements of LP Policy WLP8.11.
7. Framework paragraph 79 c) refers only to the re-use of a redundant or disused building where this enhances its immediate setting. This exemption to allowing an isolated dwelling in the countryside does not refer to the enlargement of redundant or disused buildings. Compared to the previous appeal, there is not the same level of support provided through the Framework and I give greater weight to LP Policy WLP8.11 and the conflict found with that.
8. Through not meeting the requirements for permitting the residential conversion of rural buildings, this proposal would conflict generally with the spatial strategy of the LP, and specifically with policies WLP1.1 and WLP1.2. This is insofar as new development is focussed within identified settlements with better accessibility to services, reducing a reliance on private car journeys and protecting the undeveloped character of the countryside.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

9. I have given weight to the fallback position of the permitted development rights to extend the completed conversion once carried out. The proposal would provide a small social benefit in adding to the supply of housing in the District, where there would be the environmental advantages of this making efficient use of previously developed land. There would be small benefits to the local economy through the construction of the new dwelling and future expenditure of an additional household. There are also small visual benefits provided by the more sympathetic landscaping involved with this proposal.
10. Set against these small benefits is the more significant harm resulting from the increased amount of residential development in a relatively isolated rural location, which then conflicts with the wider spatial strategy of the LP. This factor is given significant weight as such a strategy remains consistent with that of the Framework over the achieving of sustainable development.
11. On balance, I consider the nature and location of this residential proposal would be inappropriate, when assessed against local and national planning policies as a whole. Consequently, having taken into account all other matters raised, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Price

Inspector