



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2021 by Thomas Courtney BA(Hons) MA

Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/21/3270483

News Hill Barn, Methersgate Hall Drive, Sutton, Woodbridge IP12 3FD

- 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 & Mrs Ashton against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/20/4794/FUL, dated 24 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 21 January 2021.
 - The development proposed is a detached double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a detached double garage at News Hill Barn, Methersgate Hall Drive, Sutton, Woodbridge, IP12 3FD, in accordance with the terms of application Ref DC/20/4794/FUL, dated 24 November 2020 and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos. 304ATN-000 Rev. A, 19815/52 Rev. A, 19815/53 Rev. A and 994.20.1.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the proposed development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.
 - 4) All planting, seeding or turfing comprised in the approved details of landscaping shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the occupation of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species.

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.

Procedural Matter

3. The Government published on 20 July 2021 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst I have had regard to the revised national
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policy as a material consideration in my decision-making, planning decisions must still be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, the issues most relevant to the appeal remain unaffected by the revisions to the Framework. I am therefore satisfied that there is no requirement to seek further submissions on the revised Framework, and that no party would be disadvantaged by such a course of action.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the development would preserve and enhance the character and setting of the host dwelling and conserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character & Appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a recently converted and extended barn, known as News Hill Barn, located in the open countryside and within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. Dating from the late 19th Century, the converted barn is considered to be a Non-Designated Heritage Asset. It is a tall two-storey structure built of red brick and features distinctive sash windows and large glazed openings in-situ of the original barn doors. The single-storey extension is more contemporary in appearance with vertical timber cladding and a zinc pitched roof.
6. The surrounding area is characterised by a mix of agricultural fields, heath land and small pockets of woodland. The host building sits at the bottom of a 5-6 metre bank which forms the site's southern boundary. The western edge of the site is well-screened with mature trees whilst the northern and eastern boundaries are more open. The site is accessed via a farm track which also serves as a public footpath.
7. The proposed garage would lie to the south west of the host building, with a 7-metre separation gap. Whilst the Council consider that the development would be poorly designed and have a suburban appearance, I disagree and regard that the building would harmonise with the architectural profile of the converted barn and extension. It would appear sufficiently subordinate given its single-storey height and would feature materials that would match the existing building. The use of vertical larch timber cladding and side-hung, vertical timber doors would also give the garage a rural profile.
8. The Council contend that the development would detract from the current isolated setting of the barn. However, I find that the design and discreet profile of the garage would not dominate the barn or be visually intrusive so as to adversely impact its setting. I also note that it would sit comfortably within the historical footprint of ancillary buildings formerly attached to the barn, as evidenced by the Historical Assessment document submitted by the appellant. The garage would therefore constitute somewhat of a nod to the historical agricultural layout of News Hill Barn.
9. I have had regard to the Landscape & Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) submitted by the appellant, and I am satisfied the development would not feature prominently given the surrounding topography. It would be shielded

from view to the south, west, and east and there would only be limited views of the development from the north. Although accepting its visibility from the footpath to the north, the proposed garage would not have a negative visual impact given its simple and attractive design and in light of the fact that it would be positioned below the skyline to the south of the building which reduces its visibility in the landscape. The native screen planting and hedging would aid in reducing views of the development further whilst still maintaining the openness of the site.

10. I also concur with the appellant in that the garage would allow for the reduction in externally parked vehicles and the storage of materials and machinery that currently clutter the setting of the Non-Designated Heritage Asset.
11. Given the above, I therefore find the proposal would preserve and enhance the character and setting of the host building and would conserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. I therefore consider that the proposed development would not conflict with Policy SCLP11.1 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan which seeks to ensure that proposals are well-designed and Policy SCLP5.5 which seeks to ensure that conversions of buildings in the countryside enhance the character and setting of the rural building. The proposal would also adhere to Policy 11.6 of the Local Plan which seeks to ensure that proposals do not harm the significance of Non-Designated Heritage Assets and Policy 10.4 which seeks to ensure proposals protect and enhance the Suffolk Coast and Heaths AONB. In addition, I do not find there to be conflict with paragraph 176 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires great weight to be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB.

Conditions

12. The Council has suggested a number of conditions that it would wish to see imposed in the event that the appeal was successful. I have considered the suggested conditions against the advice on conditions set out in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.
13. I have imposed the standard conditions relating to the commencement of development and specifying the relevant plans in order to provide certainty. I have also included the Council's suggested condition requiring the external materials match the existing building, in order to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.
14. I have also included a landscaping condition to ensure the delivery of effective screening in order to protect the character and appearance of the AONB.

Recommendation

15. The proposal would not conflict with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
16. Therefore, for the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be allowed.

Thomas Courtney

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR