



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2021

by Ian Radcliffe BSc(Hons) MRTPI MCIEH DMS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/21/3276289

South End Barn, The Grain Store, Renhold Road, Ravensden MK44 2RH

- 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 Hills against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00036/FUL, dated 7 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 4 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is a new detached triple garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. An extant planning permission exists for a twin garage to serve South End Barn. The plan that shows where this garage would be located on the site was missing from the plans provided by the appellant. At the request of the Inspector, all the approved plans in relation to this permission were provided by the local planning authority.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The Grain Store is a former agricultural building located in the countryside that has been converted to residential use and sub-divided into two dwellings (North End Barn and South End Barn) under permitted development rights. Located at the northern end of Ravensden on a wide open plot, and separated from the ribbon of residential development to the south by a wide ungated field access, the converted building very much appears to be part of the surrounding agricultural landscape rather than part of the suburban style housing that characterises the isolated cluster of housing that forms the settlement.
5. The proposed triple garage would serve South End Barn that forms the southern half of the building. Located forward of the front elevation of the converted building it would be orientated so that it would face oncoming traffic from the south along Ravensden Road. In so doing, visible from the start of the settlement to the south, it would become the most prominent part of development associated with the converted building.
6. To the rear of its proposed location are brick built, single storey, agricultural buildings with pantile roofs associated with Home Farm. The outbuilding immediately behind the proposed site of the garage, which has the words Home Farm made out on its roof, makes a positive contribution to the

agricultural character and appearance of the area of countryside in which the appeal site is located. Positioned on slightly higher ground than these buildings I am satisfied that on the approach along Ravensden Road from the south, in terms of position and width, the proposed garage would obscure much of this outbuilding immediately behind and have a significant adverse urbanising effect on the appeal site and area. The incorporation of a mono pitch roof and the use of materials that would match the converted building would not overcome the harm described.

7. There is an extant permission for a twin garage of the same appearance as the appeal proposal on the site. However, as both would be located in effectively the same position, by virtue of its greater width, the proposed triple garage would project closer to the road. When assessing the impact of the scale and prominence of development on the character and appearance of an area a point is reached when a proposal becomes unacceptable. In my judgement, in this prominent position the increase in scale from a twin garage to a triple garage would comfortably exceed this point. The fallback position of the extant permission is a consideration therefore that does not justify the proposal.
8. Two other houses on the same side of the road as the appeal property to the south have detached garages to the front of the dwellings. However, both are twin garages located within a row of suburban style housing that are largely screened by mature planting. As a result, unlike the appeal proposal, they complement their surroundings rather than detract from them.
9. Taking all these matters into account, I therefore conclude that the large size of the proposed garage in this prominent position would constitute poor design that would cause demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies 28S, 29, 30 and 66 of the Bedford Borough Local Plan ('Local Plan') which seek high quality design to avoid such harm. As a consequence, it would also be contrary to policy 7S of the Local Plan which controls development in the countryside.
10. Reference has been made to the Council's supplementary design guidance '*Residential Extensions, New Dwellings and Small Infill Developments*' (SDG). However, as the proposed development is for an ancillary domestic building, and the excerpts of the SDG that it is stated the proposal would be contrary to relate to extensions, I am satisfied that the cited sections of the SDG are not relevant to the appeal proposal.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ian Radcliffe

Inspector