



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 January 2022

by M Chalk BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2nd February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/W/21/3277900

Land south of Barrells Road, Thurston, IP31 3SF

- 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 Dover Farm Developments Ltd against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/02476, dated 23 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is conversion of barn to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The building the subject of this appeal is an open-sided barn sited along one edge of an open field. New houses were under construction along Barrells Road to the north of the field at the time of my visit, and together with existing houses along Barrells Road these formed a clear boundary line along the northern edge of the field. The barn lies beyond this boundary line, and its conversion would result in the extension of residential development further into the countryside. This would be contrary to the clear linear pattern of development along Barrells Road and the northern edge of the field and the rural character of the site and wider area.
4. Land associated with neighbouring properties at Elgin House, Popples and Woodlands extends as far from Barrells Road as the appeal site. However, this is visually separated from the appeal site by a tall screen of mature trees between the barn and Elgin House. The barn is visible from Barrells Road across the open field, and from this viewpoint the appeal proposal would represent an intrusive form of residential development that would be seen against the backdrop of the mature trees. The proposal includes extensive areas of glazing to the building elevation facing into the field, and light spillage from the house at night would be highly visible given the separation from the new and existing houses closer to Barrells Road.
5. Planning permission has been granted to extend the gardens of two of the new houses along Barrells Road up to the railway line, but these are the houses farthest from the appeal site, and the permission is subject to restrictions preventing the erection of buildings on the extended garden land. The intervening houses follow the linear pattern of development along Barrells Road with rear garden boundaries that do not extend as far from the street as the

appeal site. These houses therefore differ significantly from the proposed development where the house would be a significant distance from the road. They therefore carry limited weight in my determination of this appeal.

6. Landscaping could soften the overall appearance of the converted building. However, given the size of the site, the proposed house would require extensive planting that would take significant time to become established and provide effecting screening. There would also be no way to guarantee that it would be retained in the longer term. This also therefore carries limited weight.
7. The appeal proposal would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would consequently conflict with Policies GP1, H7, H13 and H15 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan 1998 (the LP). Taken together, these policies seek that development maintain or enhance the character and appearance of their surroundings and that new housing should be consistent with the pattern and form of development in the neighbouring area.

Planning Balance

8. The most important development plan policies for the determination of this appeal are those identified above. Of these, the appellant contends that Policy H7 of the LP is out of date. This policy imposes a restrictive approach to development outside settlements not consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), and therefore the conflict with this policy attracts limited weight. However, there is no suggestion that Policies GP1, H13 or H15 of the LP are out of date. The most important policies, when taken as a whole, are not therefore out of date and the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this instance.
9. The appeal proposal would create one new house. While the Council can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land, this does not diminish the value of new housing. The appeal site is in a sustainable location with access to services and facilities within walking and cycling distance. There would be economic benefits for local shops and services from the occupation of the house, as well as short term benefits from the jobs associated with the conversion works. The proposal would create a family house, and its occupants would contribute to the local community.
10. Set against these benefits would be the harm arising to the character and appearance of the area from the conversion of the building. While the site is near to existing houses and new residential development, the barn is a visually separate building and the conversion would result in an intrusive form of residential development in this location not in keeping with the general linear pattern of development along Barrells Road. The harm from the development would outweigh the limited benefits associated with the creation of a single dwelling.
11. There are therefore no material considerations to indicate that this appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, the appeal fails.

M Chalk

INSPECTOR