
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2022

by Martin Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/21/3282643

Land adjacent to Quarry Farm, Bury Lane, Doynton, South Gloucestershire BS30 5SW

- 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 Mrs Rosemary Hargreaves, R&J Property against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref P21/02598/F, dated 6 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of 3no derelict, former agricultural buildings and conversion of 1no redundant agricultural building to a 3 bedroom single storey family dwelling with associated car parking, refuse and recycling storage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised in this case are:
 - Whether or not the proposal is inappropriate development in the Green Belt,
 - The effect on the openness of the Green Belt,
 - Whether the location is suitable for the proposed development with reference to the locational strategy of the development plan, and
 - If the proposal is inappropriate development whether the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development.

Reasons

Whether or not inappropriate development

3. The appeal site is located within the Green Belt. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), at para 150, indicates that certain forms of development are not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided that they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. The re-use of buildings provided that they are of permanent and substantial construction is listed under this paragraph.
4. The site comprises of four existing buildings, referenced A to D, with three proposed to be demolished (B to D) and building A converted to a dwelling. The Structural Survey submitted with the planning application identifies building A as being constructed from a proprietary steel barn system, formed from two 3-bay

kits butted together. There is a corrugated board roof supported on the steel frame. There is little information provided in respect of the external walls, with the report stating only that there is some corrugated board cladding and that "There is also an inner blockwork walls [sic] to the milking parlour and internal blockwork dividing walls." The submitted Design and Access Statement (DAS) states that there are blockwork infill walls.

5. At the time of my site visit, I was able to see that the external walls of the building are constructed from a variety of materials including timber, metal sheeting, corrugated boards and blockwork. The appeal includes details of the areas of the building that are proposed to be demolished in order to convert the building. This includes large expanses to both of the longest elevations, in the position of current openings. However, this would result in little of the existing fabric of the building remaining. I am also conscious that to the west elevation, there were areas of cladding that were damaged and appear to not be capable of retention, which would further increase the necessary areas of demolition.
6. I am also conscious that the roof of the building would be removed, with the Schedule of Works attached to the DAS stating that all roof coverings and external wall claddings are to be stripped, while the proposed typical external wall section drawing also indicates the existing corrugated roofing sheets will be replaced. This is not shown on the elevation drawings depicting the extent of demolition.
7. There is also reference to significant corrosion to the bases of steelwork posts within the building, addressing this would require new structural elements to be included. While the appellant asserts that these works could be undertaken at this time without the need for permission, they nonetheless comprise works necessary to undertake the proposed development.
8. In my view, given the existing condition of the building together with the necessary amount of demolition and rebuild, or "fresh build", in totality the scheme would not comprise the re-use of the existing building, but it would to all effects be a rebuilding to accommodate the proposed development and would result in the construction of a new building.
9. Consequently, in not comprising one of the forms of development permitted by paragraph 150 of the Framework, and not complying with the exceptions as outlined by paragraph 149, the scheme would comprise inappropriate development in the Green Belt, which paragraph 147 states is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.

Effect on openness

10. Paragraph 137 of the Framework indicates that openness and permanence are the essential characteristics of the Green Belt.
11. I am conscious that the scheme would result in the removal of three out of the four redundant buildings at the site. This would remove some of the existing built form and, in both visual and spatial terms, there would be some benefit to the openness of the Green Belt.

Suitability of location

12. Policy PSP40 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Place Plan (adopted 2017) (the PSP Plan) set out the circumstances where residential development in the countryside, outside of settlement boundaries will be acceptable. One of these circumstances is where the scheme is for the conversion and re-use of existing buildings. As I have found above that the scheme would

result in the rebuild, and not re-use, of the building, the scheme fails to accord with this criterion of the policy. Furthermore, the scheme does not accord with any of the other situations outlined in this policy.

13. Thus, the proposal conflicts with policy PSP40, insofar as it seeks to strictly limit development in the countryside.

Other considerations

14. I acknowledge that the proposal would result in benefits through the provision of additional accommodation. However, given the scale of the development, I accord limited weight to this.
15. The site is located within the Cotswolds National Landscape (the CNL), formerly the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However, I am also conscious that at this countryside location, agricultural buildings such as those within the appeal site are common and accepted features in the landscape. Nonetheless, there would be some benefit to the removal of the existing structures, in visual terms in respect of the AONB, through the removal of built form. However, the benefit would be tempered by the effect of the inevitable domestic paraphernalia, including the introduction of lighting, that would result from the establishment of a residential use at the site.

Other Matters

16. The appellant draws my attention to an appeal decision. However, given the limited information submitted in respect of the scheme to which that decision refers, I am unable to draw any meaningful comparison. As such, this has little bearing on my decision.

Green Belt Balance and Conclusion

17. The proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and the Framework establishes that substantial weight should be given to any harm to the Green Belt. There would also be harm in terms of conflict with the locational strategy of the development plan. These matters weigh heavily against the proposal.
18. There would be benefits in terms of the openness of the Green Belt, effect on the CNL and provision of housing. I accord these matters moderate weight. I find therefore that the other considerations in this case do not clearly outweigh the harm that I have identified. Consequently, the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development do not exist. The proposal would be contrary to the guidance of the Framework. There would also be conflict with policies CS5 and CS34 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan – Core Strategy (adopted 2013), as well as policy PSP7 of the PSP Plan, insofar as they seek to prevent inappropriate development in the Green Belt.
19. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR