
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 March 2022

by M Woodward BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th April 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/21/3281779

2 Grove Farm Close, Offord D'arcy PE19 5SY

- 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 Phil Simpson against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00073/FUL, dated 12 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 May 2021.
 - The development is change of use from paddock to garden & retention of outbuilding.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use from paddock to garden & retention of outbuilding at 2 Grove Farm Close, Offord D'Arcy PE19 5SY in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/00073/FUL, dated 12 January 2021, and the plans submitted with it.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs Simpson against Huntingdonshire District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matters

3. The development which is the subject of this appeal has already been carried out. As 'retrospective' is not an act of development, but was included in the development description on the application form, I have omitted this word from the description in the banner heading above.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. No 2 Grove Farm Close (No 2) is a large, detached property which includes a single-storey garage element¹ adjacent to which the outbuilding sits. Whilst the grass land/paddock immediately surrounding part of the appeal site is relatively open and undeveloped, it is contained by a perimeter hedgerow.
6. The extended amenity garden space mostly lies to the rear of the existing garage and does not stray significantly beyond the building line established by

¹ Planning permission reference - 20/00892/HHFUL

the garage and into the wider paddock immediately to the east. Whilst I understand that the adjacent garden associated with No 2 has itself been extended in the past, the garden which is the subject of this appeal forms an unobtrusive and well-related extension of the existing garden at No 2.

7. In respect of the hardstanding and outbuilding, I do not disagree with the Council that the paddock provides a visual buffer between the built form associated with No 2 and the open countryside beyond the established hedgerow to the east. Be that as it may, the hardstanding has an almost flat profile, and the outbuilding is modest in scale and has a limited footprint. In my view these elements appear subservient to the existing built form and have a limited diminishing effect on the openness and rural characteristics of the wider paddock and countryside.
8. The appellant has made me aware of an extant planning permission for two houses on a separate plot of land to the south of the appeal site². Irrespective of the circumstances involved in the decision to grant that permission, assuming the extant permission is implemented, the appeal site would be faced by built form on two sides, reinforcing the development's affinity with the established pattern of development in the locality.
9. Huntingdonshire's Local Plan to 2036 (2019) (the Local Plan) provides guidance on the definition of 'built-up areas'. Even if I was to accept the Council's assertion that the appeal site lies outside of a built-up area and in the countryside, the Local Plan and National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) does not preclude appropriate development in the countryside provided it recognises its intrinsic character.
10. In this case I find that the development is well related to the existing built form in terms of its location and scale and does not harm the character and appearance of the area or countryside. As such, the development accords with Policies LP2, LP9 and LP10(b) of the Local Plan and the Framework which require, amongst other matters, that development protects the intrinsic character and beauty of the surrounding countryside on land that relates well to the existing built-up area.

Other Matters

11. Allowing this appeal would not set a precedence for similar forms of development on other sites as it is a well held planning principle that each case should be assessed on its own merits. I have determined this appeal based on development as built having regard to the prevailing characteristics of the site and its surroundings.
12. As the development is already in situ, and in the absence of suggestions from the Council, I do not consider it necessary to impose any planning conditions.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above, the appeal is allowed.

M Woodward

INSPECTOR

² Planning permission reference - 16/01671/FUL – granted 2019