



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 June 2022

by Emma Worley BA (Hons) Dip EP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7TH July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/K0235/D/22/3297299

Northey Farm House, School Lane, Carlton, Bedfordshire MK43 7LG

- 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 P Burridge against the decision of Bedford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03111/FUL, dated 29 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a domestic double garage for the storage of vehicles and workshop space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of a domestic double garage for the storage of vehicles and workshop space at Northey Farm House, School Lane, Carlton MK43 7LG in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 21/03111/FUL, dated 29 November 2021, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following plans: PL-A-0001-A, XX-A-0003-A and XX-A-0004-A.
 - 3) Prior to the construction of the walls of the garage samples of the materials to be use in the external surfaces of the garage hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved samples.
 - 4) The garage hereby permitted not be used at any time other than for purposes ancillary to the residential use of the dwelling known as Northey Farm House.
 - 5) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the recommendations an mitigation measures set out in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Land at Northey Farmhouse, Carlton, Bedford Borough dated March 2022, by Philip Irving.

Procedural Matters

2. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was submitted as part of the appeal, which includes an assessment of the effect of the proposal in terms of ecology and biodiversity. The council have confirmed that the proposal would therefore accord with policy 42S of the Bedford Borough Local Plan 2030. This would address the second refusal reason.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site includes a rectangular area of concrete hardstanding which provides vehicular access from School Lane, and a steel storage container. The proposal seeks to replace the existing storage container with a single storey detached garage set further back from the highway. The building is to be used by the appellant for the parking of vehicles and a workshop.
5. The proposed garage would be sited between the residential properties of Northey Farm House and The Cottage, on land surrounded by an area of mown lawn. There are a range of redundant traditional rural buildings on the opposite side of School Lane and open agricultural land to the rear. The appeal site also includes a number of mature and semi mature ornamental trees, which provide a degree of visual enclosure.
6. The proposed garage would be of a relatively small scale. It is utilitarian in design and form, with a shallow roof pitch which serves to minimise the height and bulk of the building. The building would be constructed with timber clad walls and a metal box profile roof, with a roller shutter door and a single pedestrian door to the side elevation. Such materials are considered to be in keeping with the rural setting and would be appropriate for use in the construction of an outbuilding of this nature.
7. The size of the proposed garage would appear to be appropriate for a domestic outbuilding, providing space for the parking of 2 cars and a modest workshop area for use by the appellant, ancillary to the residential use of the main dwelling. Furthermore, the building would be commensurate with the size and scale of Northey Farm House and would appear visually subordinate to it. There is no clear reason that the garage would not be so substantial in size that it would be likely to lead to a future alternative commercial use of the building. I therefore have no reason to believe the garage would not be used for purposes ancillary to Northey Farm House.
8. The garage would be set apart from the main dwelling, but with a high degree of intervisibility between the 2 buildings, despite the presence of a number of mature trees between them. It would also be well related to other development in the vicinity, including the adjacent rural buildings and residential properties.
9. I find therefore that the garage, which would be well related to the existing built development in the immediate vicinity in terms of siting, scale and design, would not appear as a visually incongruous feature in this location. Furthermore, the building would not unduly encroach into the open countryside and would therefore safeguard the character and beauty of the countryside. As a consequence, the proposal would be acceptable in terms of its effect on the rural character and appearance of the area.
10. The site lies outside a defined development boundary and in an area of open countryside. Whether or not the proposal is within the garden, policy 66 of the Bedford Borough Council Local Plan 2030 (LP) supports the provision of ancillary domestic buildings in the countryside subject to specific criteria

including use, design and size and providing there is no adverse impact upon the character and appearance of the area and/or historic environment.

11. LP policy S7 specifically allows development in the countryside if it is appropriate in the countryside in accordance with relevant LP policies, which include policy 66. This is providing that the development recognises the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside; and would not give rise to other impacts that would adversely affect the use and enjoyment of the countryside by others. For the reasons set out above I find that the proposal would therefore accord with policies 66 and S7 of the LP.

Other Matters

12. I note the suggestion that an alternative position closer to the main house would be preferable as it would ensure that the use remained ancillary to the main dwelling and would consolidate the existing built development and prevent sporadic piecemeal development. However, the appeal falls to be considered on the basis of the plans before me, which for the reasons set out above I find to be acceptable.

Conditions

13. In addition to the standard condition in relation to the time period for the implementation of the permission I have specified the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt. A condition relating to external materials is necessary to ensure the appearance of the garage would be satisfactory. In order to address concerns regarding the use of the building, a condition to restrict the use to purposes ancillary to the residential use of Northey Farm House, so as to prevent commercial activity, is also specified. The wording departs from that suggested by the Council to provide greater clarity.
14. I have also specified a condition to secure the implementation of the recommendations and mitigation measures set out in the submitted Preliminary Ecology Appraisal. This will minimise impacts of the development upon biodiversity and reduce risks to protected species during the construction phase, including amphibian and reptile species.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

Emma Worley

INSPECTOR