
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2022

by T J Burnham BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H0928/W/22/3292649

Eden Field, On the C3015 from the C3016 to the C3027 at Coombe Eden, Armathwaite CA4 9PQ

- 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 D Smith against the decision of Eden District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0732, dated 2 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 5 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is extension to existing barn to form additional residential accommodation following approval of Application 19/0858.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Both the descriptions of the proposal on the application form and the Council decision are wholly unclear when considered against the evidence and also include wording that is not a description of development.
3. Subsequently, the proposal could be better described as 'change of use of existing building to create an independent dwelling including two storey extension to rear'.
4. The main parties have been consulted on this matter. The appellant suggests that they could agree to a revised description of 'change of use of existing building from ancillary residential accommodation for Eden Field to create an independent dwelling including two storey extension to rear'.
5. However, that description would still be unclear given that the existing plans indicate the building to be used wholly as a 'store'. Observations on my site visit when viewing the building internally did not lead me to disagree with the description on the plan.
6. The appellant has concerns as to the applicability of Policy RUR3 of the Eden Local Plan 2014-2032 (ELP). The Policy relates to Re-use of Redundant Buildings in Rural Areas.
7. Whilst no specific definition of the term 'redundant' is provided, the term within the context of this Policy could reasonably, amongst other things, relate to a building which is no longer required for its original intended purpose, as appears to be the case in relation to the proposal before me, which is located

within a rural area. The Policy is therefore relevant, regardless of the issues surrounding the description.

Main Issue

8. The main issue therefore is whether the proposal represents an appropriate re-use of a redundant building, having regard to the effect of the proposal on the significance of the barn which is considered a non-designated heritage asset.

Reasons

9. The former agricultural barn, which is built in pink sandstone is a characterful and well-established building set immediately adjacent to the roadside at Eden Field.
10. It retains its attractive appearance despite what appears to be a more modern window and door arrangement that has been inserted into part of the road facing elevation.
11. The significance of the building sits with its materials, its traditional, balanced form and very limited number of openings which enable it to be read as a former agricultural building with historic ties to former farming practices.
12. The extension proposed would almost double the footprint of the existing building and consume a large proportion of the rear elevation. It would be set in from the south east and north west side elevations of the building, would incorporate a lower ridgeline to its roof than the existing building and would utilise materials to match.
13. However, the extension would incorporate an open plan kitchen, dining room and snug area to the ground floor and three bedrooms to the first floor and a range of window openings uncharacteristic of the barn in its south east side elevation including at first floor level.
14. The design would combine to form an overpowering extension which by reason of its extensive projection and large form would over-dominate the existing building and make its identification as a traditional former agricultural building difficult.
15. The extension, which would be clearly visible in views from the passing road to the south of the site, would therefore detract from the significance of the building and would not form an appropriate re-use of a redundant building. The proposal would subsequently conflict with policies RUR3 and DEV5 of the ELP.
16. Policy RUR3 states that the re-use of redundant traditional rural buildings and structures for housing amongst other uses will be supported in rural areas where it meets various criteria including where the proposal is of a high-quality design, retaining amongst other things the design, that contributes positively to the character of the building and its surroundings. Amongst other things, Policy DEV5 requires that new development should protect features and characteristics of local importance.

Other Matters

17. I have been provided with details of the scheme approved under former application 19/0858. However, that is a substantially different scheme. The window arrangement to the southern elevation of the original building is

perhaps more sympathetic under the scheme before me. However, this relates to only a small aspect of the building, I therefore afford this matter limited weight and any benefit would not outweigh the harm identified.

18. The existing conservatory within the garden and the proposed garage, respectively, do and would likely have a neutral impact on the significance of the building by reason of detachment and separation. I therefore afford limited weight to the suggestion that they could be removed/omitted from future development at the site.
19. I afford limited weight to the provision of a slate roof to the existing building as part of the proposals as the existing corrugated roofing has an embedded appearance resulting in it having a neutral impact on the significance of the building.
20. The parties agree that some permitted development rights could be available to the building as a dwellinghouse, which the evidence indicates there is permission to convert to. However, the size of extension resulting from the use of any permitted development rights would appear to be much smaller than under this scheme. I therefore afford this matter limited weight.
21. I note that the appellants are long standing local residents and that there would be benefit to them in realising the proposals in the scheme before me. However, the justification as to the need to relocate from the existing dwelling at Eden Field is very limited, such that I cannot afford this matter significant weight.
22. Natural England has recently updated the conservation status of the River Eden SAC, part of which is located nearby the site. Concern over water quality is identified with regard to phosphorus. However, given that I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I will not explore this matter further.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

23. There is nothing to indicate that the decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

T J Burnham

INSPECTOR