
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2022

by J Ayres BA Hons, Solicitor

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/21/3284461

Greenacres Farm, Rockbourne Road, Coombe Bissett SP5 4LP

- 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 Salarian Homes Ltd against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 21/00684/FUL, dated 20 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 7 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is proposed redevelopment of outbuilding in the countryside to residential dwelling with amenity area and parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are;
 - (i) Whether the site is suitable for the development in principle having regard to local and national policy; and
 - (ii) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to its location within the Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (the AONB).

Reasons

The principle of the development

3. The appeal site is within a small cluster of buildings in a mix of uses including residential and agricultural barns, and does not appear isolated in its immediate setting. However, the site is a significant distance from a settlement which offers the necessary services and facilities to support residential occupation, and residents would be largely dependant on the private vehicle to access the nearest village and/or town. The site is clearly outside of the defined limits of development as defined by the Wiltshire Core Strategy (The Core Strategy) and located within a rural area, somewhat isolated from day to day services and facilities.
4. Core Policy 48 of the Core Strategy seeks to support proposals for rural development where those proposals accommodate particular needs. It advises that, in respect of the conversion and re-use of rural buildings, residential development may be appropriate where the proposal meets a number of criteria. In isolated locations, the re-use of redundant or disused buildings for

residential purposes may be permitted where justified by special circumstances.

5. The building is currently in use for storage, and therefore continues to serve a function in this regard. As such it is not redundant or disused, and accordingly I find that the proposal would conflict with Policy 48 of the Core Strategy in respect of the current use of the building and its suitability for conversion in principle.

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site is set within the AONB, the topography of which gently undulates across the wider landscape, creating rolling hills interspersed by woodland and natural vegetation. Whilst located on the peak of a soft hilltop, the site is nestled into a small cluster of existing development and as such it is not a prominent element of the landscape.
7. The existing structure of the barn comprising a steel frame in-filled with concrete blocks, does little to enhance the character of the area, however it is in keeping with the historical use and character of the immediate setting. The structure would be retained and thermally upgraded internally, with the existing concrete slab also retained. A new entrance would be formed on the west elevation, serving 3no. double bedrooms, a study, and an open plan kitchen/living/dining area.
8. The conversion of the building would create a modest, well designed dwelling which would utilise the existing building. It would be set within the visual envelope of the existing built form and the improved aesthetic of the building would enhance the character of the AONB by converting the existing rather unsightly building to a well designed dwelling with improved ancillary landscaping, thereby enhancing the rural aspect of the AONB.
9. I find that the proposal would not be harmful to the character of the area, and would sit comfortably within the AONB. It would therefore comply with Policy CP51 of the Core Strategy which requires development to protect and conserve landscape character. It would also comply with Policy 57 of the Core Strategy which requires a high standard of design in all new developments, including extensions, alterations, and changes of use of existing buildings.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

10. I have found that the proposal would conflict with the Core Strategy in respect of its existing use and subsequent proposed use. Whilst I have found that the proposal would not result in harm to the character of the area and the AONB, and acknowledge that the proposal would provide an additional dwelling, I consider that these factors would not overcome the fundamental conflict with the Core Strategy.
11. Accordingly, for the reasons above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

J Ayres

INSPECTOR