



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2022

by J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2620/W/22/3299148

Land to north of Parrs Farm, Hall Lane, Knapton, NR28 0SG

- 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 Luke West against the decision of North Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref PF/21/2118, dated 4 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of an existing barn and the erection of a 4-bed detached dwelling with detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the countryside around Knapton, and
 - The sustainability of the proposed dwelling in terms of accessibility.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is situated to the west of Hall Lane, which is a rural road running between Knapton in the north and North Walsham to the south. The site contains a barn with part-open and part-corrugated sides, a corrugated roof, and an open front. There is a narrow, rough-surfaced access drive from the road to the barn. To the south are the residential properties of Star and Nap and Copperfield Barn, and to the north are Parrs Farm Cottage and Syrett Cottage. To the west is open farmland and countryside.
4. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing barn and its replacement with a 4-bed house with a detached garage. The house would be built on roughly the same footprint as the existing barn, and the garage would lie to the rear of the curtilage of Copperfield Barn. The curtilage of the dwelling would extend into the farmland to the rear. The dwelling itself would be constructed of metal and cedar cladding,
5. Policy SS1 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS) indicates that outside of specified settlements, the rest of North Norfolk will be designated as Countryside and development will be restricted to particular types of development to support the rural economy, meet affordable housing needs and

- provide renewable energy. Policy SS2 indicates that in areas designated as Countryside, development will be limited to that which requires a rural location and is for one or more of a number of specified purposes. Policy SS4 indicates that all development proposals must contribute to the delivery of sustainable development, and be located and designed so as to reduce carbon emissions.
6. Policy EN2 of the CS indicates that development proposals should demonstrate that their location, scale, design and materials will protect, conserve and, where possible, enhance the special qualities and local distinctiveness of the area. Policy EN4 indicates that all development should be designed to a high quality, and design which fails to have regard to local context and does not preserve or enhance the character/quality of an area will not be acceptable.
 7. The Council contends that the proposal is in a location with poor access to a full range of basic services and facilities to meet day-to-day needs, and the future occupiers would therefore be highly dependent on the use of a private car. No mitigating circumstances have been provided by the applicant to justify any essential need for a dwelling in this location. In addition, the proposed development would result in encroachment of the intended curtilage into agricultural land to the rear of the proposal site and beyond the rear linear building line of development along Hall Lane. It would not, therefore, conform to the prevailing form and character of the locality. Finally, the increased scale of the building, and positioning of glazing on the rear elevation, which could result in excessive light spill, would result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape.
 8. The appellant contends that although the barn is within the countryside, many agricultural buildings surrounding it have recently received planning approval. Moreover, the encroachment into agricultural land would be small and this factor, along with the small increase in height, would not result in a large visible difference. The current building is in poor condition and the new dwelling would be a visual improvement. Finally, heavy reliance on public transport is not necessary since that there are travel options with bus stops around a 12 minute walk away.

Character and appearance

9. The barn would appear to have previously been part of a complex of buildings known generically as Parrs Farm. The farm buildings have now been largely converted into separate residential properties with domestic outbuildings. The existing appeal building is sited further west than any of the other buildings in the complex, such that it projects a little further out into the neighbouring farmland than the rear boundaries of the properties to the south, and significantly further out than the rear boundary of those to the north. As such the proposed dwelling would represent an incursion of residential building into open countryside. This would be exacerbated by the projection of the curtilage at the rear of the dwelling further into the farmland beyond. The proposed garage would be situated beyond the rear boundary of the adjacent Copperfield Barn, wholly within the farmland to the west.
10. The small cluster of buildings around the appeal site are closely grouped within their plots. The proposed dwelling would be a relatively isolated building that would extend the built environment into the countryside, albeit by a small amount. Moreover, the proposed residential curtilage, including the garage, would use existing farmland. I acknowledge that the design of the proposed

dwelling represents an attempt to replicate the general design of an agricultural building, but the amount of glazing in the east and west elevations, together with the addition of the glazed balcony at the rear, would appear as jarring and uncharacteristic features. This would particularly be the case given the prevailing use of brick and flint in the context of buildings in the immediate surrounding area.

11. The appellant refers to other conversions, new buildings and proposed new buildings in the vicinity. I note these examples but, in contrast to the proposed dwelling, none of them appear to extend the built environment away from the road into the surrounding countryside nor add a somewhat uncharacteristic design, with significant glazed elements, into the more traditional appearance of the immediate surroundings. The fact that the existing barn is not in good condition is not reason to allow a new dwelling, with an enlarged curtilage, in this position.
12. In conclusion on this issue, I consider that the proposed dwelling would not protect, conserve or enhance the local distinctiveness of the area, while its design and specific siting would fail to have regard to the local context and would not preserve or enhance the character or quality of the area. Furthermore, it would not be a development that would support the rural economy, meet affordable housing needs, or provide renewable energy, nor does it satisfy any of the specific examples of a development that requires a rural location as set out in the development plan.
13. In the light of the above, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside around Knapton, and it would conflict with Policies SS1, SS2, EN2 and EN4 of the CS.

Sustainability

14. The appeal site would not be isolated in the sense that there are a few other properties in the immediate vicinity. However, it is in an isolated position with regard to accessibility to services, facilities and public transport. It lies more than 1 km from Knapton, which is the nearest settlement, and it would appear that there are few, if any, facilities in the village, other than the local church. It would also appear that although there is a regular, if infrequent, bus service from Knapton village to larger settlements in the wider area, Hall Lane is a narrow rural road with no footpaths, and this would deter pedestrians from walking from the appeal site to the village.
15. On the basis of the above, I find that the occupiers of the proposed dwelling would be highly likely to be dependent on car usage and that the proposal would, therefore, not represent sustainable development in the sense of ready accessibility to a range of essential services and facilities. The proposed development would conflict with Policy SS4 of the CS.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR