The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 February 2023

by Les Greenwood MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/22/3312808
Plum Tree Farm, Dunwich Lane, Heveningham, Suffolk IP17 2JT

- 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 David Kindred against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
- The application Ref DC/22/1474/FUL, dated 12 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2022.
- The development proposed is a lodge.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the property and the local landscape.

Reasons

3. Plum Tree Farm is a 1.5 storey house with a range of outbuildings, in a countryside location surrounded by fields. The proposal is to build a 1.5 storey building as guest accommodation, sited towards the end of the extensive garden area.

4. Although the proposal would have a smaller footprint than the house, it would be significantly taller so that it would have the appearance of a second main building at the property. It would be well away from the house and next to a much lower storage building, consolidating and extending the spread of development in this comparatively remote location.

5. The site is set well back from Dunwich Lane and views from the lane are partially screened by roadside hedges and trees. There are no other significant public views of the property. The height and siting of the proposed building would nevertheless harmfully intensify development here, creating a significantly larger cluster of buildings as seen from the lane.

6. The appellant suggests that the proposal adopts an innovative and sustainable approach through the use of solar panels. The solar panels would make a welcome contribution towards fighting climate change, but do not represent innovative design. The proposed siting is in the location of a previously existing

farm building, which apparently was demolished some 30 years ago. This is not a sound justification for a new building of this scale in this location. I note that another 1.5 storey outbuilding has been permitted and built in a more prominent roadside location at Grove Farm nearby. I do not know the full details of that case, however, and assess this appeal proposal on its own merits.

7. There are a few other factors that weigh in favour of the proposal. Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (LP) policy SCLP5.13 supports the provision of ancillary accommodation like this in general terms. Sibton Parish Council recommends approval. Like East Suffolk Council, I find no objections to other aspects of the proposed design, which would use traditional proportions and materials.

8. Taking all of this into account, however, I conclude that due to its siting and height the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the local landscape. It therefore conflicts with the aims of LP policies SCLP5.13 and SCLP11.11, to secure high quality, locally distinctive design that has no significant adverse effect on the landscape.

9. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Les Greenwood

INSPECTOR