



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by N Teasdale BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/23/3316127

Eastside Partnership Field, Springwell, Ovington, Northumberland NE42 6EF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant full planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Gordon Bright against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03324/FUL, dated 2 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 22 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as, 'Erect a feed barn for storage of animal feed'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for a feed barn for storage of animal feed at Eastside Partnership Field, Springwell, Ovington, Northumberland NE42 6EF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/03324/FUL, dated 2 October 2022, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule attached to this Decision.

Procedural Matter

2. My attention has been drawn to works that have been said to have taken place onsite. At my site visit, I observed some gates/fencing which appeared to be new although there was no evidence that any work had commenced on the feed barn. I have therefore determined the appeal accordingly based on the plans the Council based its decision on.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt having regard to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and any relevant development plan policies;
 - The effect of the proposal on the openness of the Green Belt; and
 - Whether any harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, would be clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Whether inappropriate development

4. The appeal site relates to a parcel of land located within the Green Belt and open countryside to the north of the village of Ovington.
5. Policy STP 8 of the Northumberland Local Plan (2016-2036), 2022 (LP) amongst other matters, explains that in assessing development proposals within the Green Belt, development that is inappropriate in the Green Belt, in accordance with national planning policy, will not be supported except in very special circumstances where other considerations clearly outweigh the potential harm to the Green Belt, and any other harm resulting from the proposal. It then goes on to state that development which is not inappropriate in the Green Belt, as defined in national planning policy, will be supported.
6. Paragraph 149 of the Framework explains that a local planning authority should regard the construction of new buildings as inappropriate in the Green Belt. Exceptions to this are, amongst others, buildings for agriculture and forestry. Policy STP 8 of the LP is consistent with national Green Belt policy and as a result, I afford it full weight.
7. The proposed development involves the erection of a feed barn for the storage of animal feed. The building would be steel framed and finished with a stone base wall with timber boarding to the walls above and green coloured sheeting to the roof. Although the proposed development would be sited on the smaller parcel of land located to the south, the overall land extends 2.8 hectares, and the building would be used to store hay produced from the holding. I have had regard to the appellant's evidence showing grass cutting and hay bales in the field, as well as receipts for the purchase of hay bales.
8. I note the Council's concern that the applicant has not demonstrated that the proposed building is reasonably required in relation to agricultural use of the land given the small scale of the site and operations, which appear to be limited to producing hay bales. However, the Framework does not set out any limiting criteria relating to size or any other matters and there is no substantive evidence before me to firmly indicate that the proposed building would not be used for its intended purpose which would be agricultural.
9. I conclude that under the terms of paragraph 149 of the Framework and Policy STP 8 of the LP, the proposed development would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt as it relates to a building for agriculture. It would therefore comply with Paragraph 149 of the Framework and Policy STP 8 of the LP.
10. Given that I have concluded that the proposed development would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, there is no requirement to assess the impact of the development on the openness of the Green Belt.

Conditions

11. I have considered the Council's suggested planning conditions in their Statement of Case and in light of the Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. As a result, I have amended these where necessary for clarity.
12. The standard time for commencement of development is necessary as well as a plans condition in the interests of certainty. A condition relating to the use of the building is also necessary to ensure the use is compatible with the site and surrounding area and to enable further consideration of the effects of any alternative use on the amenity of residents, air quality and priority habitats. A

further condition requiring a barn owl nest box is necessary to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site. The Council have requested a condition relating to materials. However, I have included the approved drawings, which detail the finishing materials and this condition is not therefore necessary.

Conclusion

13. For the above reasons and having had regard to the development plan as a whole, the appeal is allowed subject to conditions.

N Teasdale

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development must be begun within three years from the date of this permission.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan and Proposed Feed Barn, Drawing No. 1/A.
- 3) The building hereby permitted shall only be used for the purposes of the storage of animal feed or other general storage of agricultural equipment and shall not be used to house livestock at any time without the prior grant of planning permission by the Local Planning Authority.
- 4) Prior to the building being brought into use, a barn owl nest box shall be incorporated into the new building, in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The nest box shall thereafter be retained in accordance with the approved details.

End of schedule