



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2023

by **D Cramond** BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th August 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/22/3308689

New Barn House, New Barn Lane, Ockley, Dorking RH5 5PF

- 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 and Mrs P Elgar against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2022/0851/PLA, dated 16 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 6 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of storage barn on existing redundant paddock land to rear.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of this area of countryside.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is described by the Appellants as former paddock, menage and agricultural grassland. For ease I shall call it a paddock. It lies to the rear of New Barn House, which is a large detached single dwelling with associated outbuildings in a very sizeable plot. The site is defined as lying in an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and in the Countryside Beyond the Green Belt (CBGB). Views into the site are constrained but the immediate and wider scene is an extremely attractive one of established rural character.
 4. The proposal comprises a barn building for the storage of agricultural vehicles, tools, machinery, fencing and so forth. It would measure 9.86 metres in main length, with a further 2.2m side lean-to, 5.8m in depth and a ridge height of 4.25m, with Dutch hipped ends. The eaves height would be 2.15m, with a low eaves to the rear and the building would have a main ridge height of 4.25m. Materials proposed include oak timber frame, timber weatherboarding to the elevations, reclaimed clay roof tiles and conservation rooflights.
 5. Policies ENV3, ENV4 and ENV22 of the Mole Valley Local Plan and Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy are relevant. In their own way, and amongst other matters, they aim to protect the character and appearance of the countryside. In paraphrase: ENV3 seeks, within CBGB, to restrict buildings to those reasonable
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for the needs of agriculture, and forestry or comprising essential facilities for outdoor sport and outdoor recreation, mineral extraction and waste disposal and for any such building to be of an appropriate scale; ENV4 makes an overall call for protection of landscape character; ENV22 echoes this for localities generally and underlines how appearance should be respected; and Policy CS1 largely directs development to settlements to increase sustainability and protect rural character and the intrinsic qualities of the countryside.

6. Given all I have seen and read I am simply not persuaded that this paddock needs to have this machinery and storage on-site within a substantial building for its reasonable maintenance and the practical task of undertaking this. There may be some degree of added convenience or other benefit to the Appellants but I fail to see a proven need for this building and to my mind the proposal would fail on a matter of principle; a principle which has a key aim of protecting the qualities of the countryside. Furthermore, when one considers the scale of proposed building my concerns are amplified. This would be a significantly sized structure aligned to a relatively small, and presently non-productive, paddock type area. The paddock has the attributes of being undeveloped and rural and contributes positively to the AGLV. I am in no doubt that the scheme would impinge on the character of the immediate locality – where garden presently clearly changes to non-domestic land – and on wider character and visual qualities.
7. In the all circumstances, I conclude that the scheme would be aesthetically harmful, unacceptable in principle and run contrary to the development plan policies which I cite in paragraph 5 above.

Other matters

8. I understand the aim to increase covered accommodation and appreciate the benefits this would bring to the Appellants. I can see that it would be helpful to free up some of the very extensive floorspace in the existing outbuildings within the defined garden area. I take the point that domestic outbuildings should not necessarily be aligned with use for paddock-related equipment although with a garden as sizeable as in this instance there would likely be cross-over in use of some of the machinery and storage needs. I do not however find the Appellants' benefits to be an overwhelming reason for allowing inappropriate development.
9. As an observation, and looking generally, every other paddock of this size would certainly not necessarily justify its own machinery storage or the Surrey countryside scene would markedly change. Maintenance of paddocks is often undertaken by equipment being brought in as and when needed.
10. I do recognise that the Appellants have given thought to the selection of materials and specific corner location. I also note that neighbours have not objected and that, rightly, no concerns over residential amenity are raised by the Council.
11. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellants but these matters, either individually or collectively, do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.

12.I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered; the Councils' policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within the Framework.

Overall conclusion

13.For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of this area of countryside. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR