



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 January 2025

by **D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/W/24/3346239

Barn at Selsley Hill known as 'Ted's Piece', Selsley, Stroud GL5 5LP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs C King against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref is S.23/2155/FUL.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing barn and erection of dwelling with associated works.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The appeal is accompanied by a copy of two unilateral undertakings (UU) which seek to ensure contributions are made towards the Rodborough Common Mitigation and Cotswolds Beechwoods Mitigation. I comment further on the undertakings below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a large and mostly open parcel of land which contains a small agricultural building. The site is sloping and mostly grassed with hedgerows forming the boundary, albeit these are sparse which open up views into the appeal site.
5. The appeal site is located within the defined settlement boundary of Stroud, at the very edge of the defined boundary. Policy HC1 of the Stroud District Local Plan November 2015 (LP) relates to small scale housing within settlement boundaries and supports development subject to meeting certain criteria.
6. Criterion 3 of Policy HC1 of the LP relates to edge of settlement sites and seeks to ensure that proposals would not appear as an intrusion into the countryside and would retain a sense of transition between the open countryside and the existing settlement's core.

7. The appeal site is located on Selsley Hill which is a predominantly residential road that rises from the more built up areas of Stroud. Dwellings are generally mixed in size and appearance but tend to be close to the road with small or no frontages that mostly line the same side of the road as the appeal site. The road is also predominantly lined with a stone wall that ends just before the appeal site where the road is then lined with hedgerows and trees. The building on the appeal site is very low in height and has an obvious agricultural appearance and even with the sparsely vegetated boundary views of the building are limited. As such, the appeal site has an open and rural character and appearance.
8. The proposed dwelling, even with its single storey design, would be much taller than the existing building on the site and as a result of the sparsely vegetated boundary it would be a prominent feature in the street scene. I note the design as well as the materials proposed are to try and make the building appear as an agricultural barn. However, the overall size of the dwelling combined with the parking and turning area and surrounding garden will result in the proposal standing out as a domestic feature in the street scene and represent an intrusion into the countryside which would erode the open and rural character and appearance of the area.
9. I am mindful that a landscaping condition could be imposed, however, I am not convinced that landscaping would be able to sufficiently screen the appeal site. Furthermore, there is very little space between the proposed dwelling and site boundary which further reduces the amount of landscaping that would be possible. There could also be pressure from future occupiers to remove or cut landscaping from leaf fall causing a nuisance or blocking light from the rooflights proposed.
10. The proposed dwelling would occupy most of the appeal site, with the remainder being mostly occupied by the parking and turning area. There would be a small area of garden to the front and side of the property. The overall result would be a cramped form of development which would be out of character with the more generously sized plots in the wider area.
11. I note that class Q prior approval applications are considered with similar sized parking and garden areas to the footprint of the building. However, the proposal is not for a class Q conversion and in this regard, I have taken account of the character and appearance of the area which the proposal would have a much smaller plot size than what is characteristic of the area.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies HC1, CP8 and CP14 of the LP. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that proposals would not appear as an intrusion into the countryside, be built at an appropriate density that is acceptable in character and conserves and enhances the built and natural environment.

Other Matters

13. The appeal site falls within the zone of influence for the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and the Rodborough Common Special Area of Conservation. As the competent decision-making authority, if I had been minded to allow the appeal it would have been necessary for me to complete an Appropriate Assessment for this scheme and consider the submitted unilateral undertakings. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I have not taken the matter further.
14. The appellant has referred to an appeal decision in an attempt to justify the appeal proposal. I do not have the full details in respect of such example so I cannot be sure of the circumstances. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits, based on the evidence before me.
15. The appeal referred to relates to the adjacent property, Greenacres and while I have not been provided with the decision or much detail it would appear to relate to a large, detached garage next to the roadside. I note the description of the general area, which is similar to my own assessment but the development was for a garage within the front garden of an existing dwelling and therefore even though the garage would be taller than the proposed dwelling it is a materially different development to the proposal before me.
16. The appeal site's location within the settlement boundary is considered to be close to a number of facilities. The Council have also found that there would be no harm to highway safety, the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and the Cotswolds National Landscape. However, these are neutral matters.
17. The proposal would result in the provision of a single dwelling with future occupiers supporting the viability of the settlement which attracts some weight in support of the appeal proposal. However, the weight is tempered by only a single dwelling being proposed and does not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

D Wilson

INSPECTOR