
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 May 2017

by Elizabeth Pleasant DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 25 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/17/3168941
Redhill Garage, Redhill, Shifnal TF2 9NZ

- 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 Duncan Stanworth against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 16/04411/FUL, dated 5 August 2016, was refused by a notice dated 19 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is the refurbishment and conversion of existing redundant buildings and change of use to form a private dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is whether the proposed development would be appropriate in principle in this location in the light of relevant local and national policies.

Reasons

3. The appeal premises are situated immediately to the rear of Redhill Garage, outside of the settlements of Telford and Shifnal, and in an area of open countryside as defined by the adopted Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan, 2015.
 4. Policy CS5 of Shropshire's Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy, 2011 (CS) makes provision for the conversion of rural buildings which take account of, and make a positive contribution to the character of the building and countryside. It further advises that open market residential conversions will only be considered where respect for the heritage asset and high standards of sustainability are achieved. SAMDev Policy MD7a states that in the countryside the conversion of buildings to open market use will only be acceptable where the building is of a design and form which is of merit for its heritage/landscape value, minimal alteration or rebuilding is required to achieve the development and the conversion scheme would respect the significance of the heritage asset, its setting and the local landscape character.
 5. These policies are consistent with Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in that they seek to promote sustainable development and locate housing where it will enhance and maintain the vitality of rural communities. Paragraph 55 also makes provision for new isolated
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- homes in the countryside where special circumstances exist, which include where a development would re-use a redundant or disused building and lead to an enhancement to the immediate setting.
6. The appeal site lies within a small cluster of properties which include a care home and a neighbouring residential bungalow known as Ferndell. It is remote from local shops and services, and the key service centre of Telford is located approximately five kilometres away. Moreover, although the site is located on the A5, Watling Street, the nearest bus stop is over two kilometres away and the A5 has no pavements or street lighting in this location. It is therefore clear to me that the site does not lie in a sustainable location, and any future occupants of the proposed dwelling would be reliant on the use of a car to access all day to day services and facilities.
 7. The Council does not appear to dispute that the proposal the subject of this appeal would not involve any substantial alterations or rebuilding works to achieve the development. However, they do not consider that the building is suitable for conversion as it has no heritage or landscape merit and the proposal would not achieve high standards of sustainability.
 8. The Council's adopted Type and Affordability of Housing Supplementary Planning Document, 2012 (SPD) provides further clarification on the meaning of a 'heritage asset' for the purposes of Policy CS5 of the CS. It advises that a building which would be considered to be a heritage asset would normally, pre-date 1950, comprise traditional materials and building methods, be of permanent and substantial construction, be of local significance and add value to the landscape.
 9. The building is constructed from concrete blockwork with a corrugated sheet metal roof. At the time of my visit it did not appear to be in use and it had a general appearance of neglect. I do not know the age of the building; however it is not a traditional vernacular building. In the absence of any evidence to lead me to a different conclusion, I do not consider that the building has any heritage value and nor is it of any local significance.
 10. In the absence of the building having any heritage value, consideration needs to be given to the value it adds to the surrounding landscape. The site is located to the rear of Redhill Garage and is completely screened from views when travelling along the A5, Watling Street. To the rear of the site there are open fields. I have not been made aware of any public rights of way which may provide views of the site from this farmland however, the building abuts the fields and it would therefore be clearly visible from the neighbouring land. Despite the building not being in a good state of repair, its simple utilitarian form does not appear incongruous in this location. Furthermore, its general appearance does not significantly detract from the visual qualities of the landscape as it is seen as part of a small cluster of development. Overall, I would consider the existing building to have a neutral impact on the character or appearance of the landscape.
 11. I have found that the existing building does not have any heritage or landscape value, and I am also not persuaded that its conversion would lead to an enhancement of its immediate setting. I understand that the existing vehicles that are stored within the appeal site would be removed, they are currently not visible from either Watling Street or the surrounding landscape. Consequently, their removal would not have a direct impact on the sites landscape setting.

Furthermore, although there would be some visual improvements to the fabric of the building as a result of the proposed conversion, the introduction of a residential use onto the site with its garden and associated paraphernalia would domesticate the appearance of the site which would be visually conspicuous from the adjoining farmland.

12. I recognise that the site is previously developed land, and I have had regard to the relevant development plan policies and advice in the Framework which gives priority to the re-use and redevelopment of brownfield sites. However, the development plan must be read as a whole. Policy CS5 and SAMDev Policy MD7a provide clear advice for residential conversions in the countryside, and the appeal proposal must therefore be assessed against those Policies.
13. The appeal proposal would be for an isolated home in the countryside. Although the development would involve the re-use of a disused building, for the reasons I have set out above, it is not a building which has any landscape or heritage value, nor would the proposal result in any material enhancement of its setting. Moreover, the proposal would not achieve high standards of sustainability.
14. I conclude that the appeal proposal would not be appropriate in principle in this location in the light of relevant local and national policies. It would not comply with the provisions of the development plan and in particular I find conflict with Policy CS5 of the CS, SAMDev Policy MD7a, and paragraph 55 of the Framework, the aims of which are set out above.

Other Matters

15. I have had regard to the appeal decisions¹ which have been drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, in those cases the proposed development was for the construction of a new dwelling on previously developed land, and the location and sustainability issues were different to this case. Those decisions are not therefore directly comparable to this case, which I have determined on its own merits.
16. I have taken into account the economic and social benefits which would arise from the provision of a new dwelling, including construction jobs and local spend. However, the adverse environmental impacts of the proposal set out above, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the economic benefits that would flow from a single dwelling when assessed against the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Elizabeth Pleasant

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/L3245/W/16/3150307 & APP/L3245/W/16/3144703