



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 February 2019

by **J D Westbrook BSc(Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 April 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/18/3217127

Great Ness Dryers Caravan Storage, Warehouse And Office, Rodefern Lane, Great Ness, SY4 2LD

- 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 M Warner, c/o The Planning Group Ltd, against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 17/02960/FUL, dated 16 June 2017, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey detached dwelling with detached garage, following the demolition of agricultural/industrial buildings of a former grain store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this are:
 - whether the proposed development would provide a suitable site for housing, having regard to the principles of sustainable development, the development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the Great Ness Conservation Area (CA) and the surrounding countryside.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies a short distance to the south of the small settlement of Great Ness, in open countryside to the north west of Shrewsbury. It includes a group of linked buildings of industrial design with surrounding agricultural land. The buildings were apparently previously in agricultural use, but now appear to be in use for commercial storage purposes. They comprise a large central core structure with a curved roof and a series of smaller extensions and additions with a range of roof designs. All are constructed from corrugated materials.
4. The proposed development would involve the demolition of the existing buildings and the erection of a new dwelling on the site of the current central core structure. There would be a new detached triple garage building, around 10 metres to the north of the dwelling, and there would be a large area of garden to the rear, in what is currently grazing/farmland. The new dwelling and the garage would have a curved roof and would include the use of timber boarding, extensive glazing and "Trespa" panels.

Suitability of the site for housing

5. The NPPF, in paragraph 78 notes that to promote sustainable development in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In paragraph 79 it continues by indicating that planning policies and decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside.
6. Policy CS1 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS) indicates that development in rural areas will be located predominantly in Community Hubs and Community Clusters, and will contribute to social and economic vitality. Outside of these settlements, development will be primarily for economic diversification or to meet local needs for affordable housing. Policy CS4 indicates that communities will become more sustainable by focusing private and public investment in the rural area into Community Hubs and Community Clusters, and not allowing development outside these settlements unless it meets policy CS5. Policy CS5 indicates that appropriate development proposals will be permitted where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits.
7. Policy MD1 of the Council's Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev) indicates that Great Ness forms part of a Community Cluster within the Shrewsbury area. Policy MD7a of the SAMDev indicates that new market housing will be strictly controlled outside of Shrewsbury, the Market Towns, Key Centres and Community Hubs and Community Clusters. There can be exceptions to this policy, but the proposed development would not meet the requirements for such exceptions.
8. In this case, Great Ness is a very small settlement with a relatively close-knit grouping of dwellings and a church. It is also a Conservation Area. The area is characterised by dwellings of a largely traditional design in red brick and/or render, including The Poplars, a red-brick Listed Building that occupies something of a focal point in the settlement. The appeal site is physically separated from the settlement and is surrounded by grazing land and farmland. It is seen in its context as an isolated industrial-type unit, with no apparent visual or functional link to the rest of Great Ness. Moreover, whilst the proposal would result in an additional open market dwelling, it would also apparently result in the loss of some employment to the area.
9. There has been some relatively new construction of dwellings in Great Ness, but these have taken the form of limited infill developments, within the confines of the settlement itself, and therefore may be said to conform to the development plan policies relating to Community Clusters, with a resultant improvement to the sustainability of settlements in these clusters.
10. In the light of the above, I find that the proposal would conflict with guidance in paragraph 79 of the NPPF. It would also conflict with a range of policies from the CS and SATDev, in that it would be located outside of the community of Great Ness and would not bring any obvious social or economic benefits to that community. It would not represent economic diversification or meet any needs for local affordable housing. Furthermore, by virtue of its relatively isolated location and resultant separation from any local services or facilities, I consider that it would not, in this case, represent a sustainable form of development. It would not, on this basis, be a suitable site for housing.

Character and appearance

11. The built form of the settlement of Great Ness occupies a very small area. The CA boundary includes some additional peripheral land. The proposed dwelling would be over 100 metres away from any dwellings within the settlement and from the CA boundary. It is surrounded by farmland and appears as an industrial type storage building, common to agricultural areas. There are other buildings of an agricultural/industrial design, including the use of corrugated metal, elsewhere in the vicinity of the appeal site, including some large buildings to the south. In this respect, the current buildings on the appeal site do not appear out of character in the open countryside, and would also seem to be in reasonable condition. They are not, therefore, an eyesore.
12. By virtue of the distance of the appeal site from the body of the settlement, the current buildings are not seen readily in the context of the CA. The removal of the existing buildings on the appeal site would, therefore, have only very slight, if any, beneficial impact on the setting or appearance of the CA.
13. The appellants note that the proposed dwelling would occupy a smaller footprint than the existing buildings, and that it would be designed to replicate the form and scale of the central Dutch Barn element of the complex. However, the dwelling would be constructed out of a range of materials, including large amounts of glazing. To replicate a Dutch Barn type of design, using the proposed palette of materials and domestic design features, would result in a building with an incongruous appearance in this open countryside location. Moreover, the distance between the dwelling and the garage would lead to the residential built form extending northwards into what is currently grazing/farmland, while the incorporation of an extensive garden area to the west of the dwelling would result in significant further encroachment of an isolated residential plot into the surrounding countryside.
14. The appellants note that permission has recently been granted for a new dwelling to the north-east of the appeal property on a large site between The Poplars and another detached house known as Oakfield. This dwelling has now been built. It is a large detached house, of traditional design and primarily constructed from red brick. It also lies within the CA. In this case, the site may be considered an infill site, and the design of the house complements to a large extent that of The Poplars, and reflects the general character and appearance of the CA. On this basis, it cannot be seen as a precedent for the development proposed on the appeal site.
15. In conclusion on this issue, I find that the proposed development would not be harmful to the CA and may therefore be said to preserve its character and appearance. However, by virtue of its design and materials, and its detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside, I find that it would conflict with Policy CS6 of the CS and Policy MD2 of the SAMDev, both of which indicate that development should respect local context and character, including matters of scale, design, form and layout.

J D Westbrook

INSPECTOR

