



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 March 2019

by **David Spencer BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 16 April 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/W/18/3218941

Station Farm Cottage, Station Road, Stanhoe, Norfolk PE31 8QN

- 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 & Mrs Miller against the decision of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/01521/F, dated 14 August 2018, was refused by notice dated 11 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a replacement dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is a remote, rural location in gently undulating countryside approximately 1 mile north of the small village of Stanhoe. It is situated in a small patchwork of enclosed pastoral fields in a gentle fold in otherwise large, open, arable landscape. Occasional stands of trees and hedgerows, including along Station Road, add to the verdant, bucolic qualities. The character of the appeal site is very rural, tranquil and largely untouched.
4. There is some scattered development in the vicinity of the appeal site including small-scale single storey dwellings at Burnacre Farm and the former flint and brick station building to the south and a simple two storey brick farmhouse at Station Farm to the north. Immediately to the north of the appeal site are a range of traditional farm buildings, principally of brick, timber and pantile. Further beyond to the north is a modern steel agricultural barn of simple appearance but this is not within the visual envelope of the appeal site.
5. The former Station Farm Cottage has been demolished and the principle of a replacement dwelling on the appeal site established through the grant of permission on appeal in early 2017¹. An earlier appeal on the site for a replacement dwelling in 2016 was dismissed². The development plan policies at the time of these appeals and now remains generally similar and as such both appeal decisions, despite arriving at different conclusions, carry appreciable weight as material considerations.

¹ APP/V2635/W/16/3164427

² APP/V2635/W/15/3130537

6. The appeal proposal is materially different to that approved on the site by virtue of its position further back within the site, its design in terms of form, layout and massing and the palette of proposed materials. The approved scheme contains numerous vernacular attributes and is of restrained proportions and footprint that would echo nearby rural dwellings. This would appear to have enabled my colleague in the previous appeal decision (3164427) to describe the approved replacement dwelling as well-proportioned, constrained in terms of its scale and of a relatively simple form and detailing appropriate to the locality.
7. In contrast, the layout, design, scale, massing and materials of this appeal proposal are markedly different resulting in a conspicuously large dwelling comprising of an awkward arrangement of elements and an associated complex composition of expansive, steeply angled rooflines. The result would be an uncoordinated structure of quasi-industrial appearance completely at odds with the rural character of the appeal site. Whilst elements of flint-work would be incorporated into the building (and together with brickwork would form the garage) these are very much subservient and the overall appearance would be dominated by zinc and charred timbers which, notwithstanding very occasional use elsewhere in Stanhoe, are not characteristic of the locality. They would be applied at an unusually significant and dominant scale that would be visible in the street scene in Station Road.
8. By virtue of being a very dominant and cumbersome building it would not be of an appropriate domestic scale that would assimilate with the limited number of nearby traditional dwellings. Its complex appearance would not be an appropriate response to the simple form of the adjacent traditional farm buildings such that there would be a discordant juxtaposition. Overall, the bulky, asymmetrical, confused appearance of the dwelling would appear harmfully at odds in the rural context of the appeal site.
9. I acknowledge that due to the topography and its position within a dip in the landscape there would be no long-range views of the dwelling. Additionally, the strong hedge to the road frontage of the appeal site would be effective in screening the dwelling from passers-by in some immediate views. However, the dwelling, due to its set-back position, would be visible through the field gateway to the south of the site and from the proposed access and north-west corner of the site. Given the scale and massing of the proposed dwelling and its pronounced and uncharacteristically bulky roof form, I am not persuaded that proposed landscaping and the position of the proposed intervening garage building would limit the harmful visual impact. I also note, however, that some screening from the public highway to the north of the site is reliant on coniferous specimens on land not in the control of the appellant. Overall, by virtue of its position and scale in relation to the adjoining farm buildings the obtrusive design of the proposed dwelling would be noticeable and would detract from the rural setting of this part of the West Norfolk countryside.
10. The appellant has referred me to numerous examples of contemporary and award-winning architecture in the Borough and elsewhere in Norfolk. I do not have the particular circumstances or context for these schemes and as such I give them limited weight. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) at paragraph 131 states that great weight should be given to outstanding or innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area, subject to the caveat that they

fit in with the overall form and layout of their surroundings. I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits and in the context of the very rural and isolated location within which it is situated.

11. I therefore conclude that the appeal proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would be contrary to Policies CS06 and CS08 of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2011 and Policy DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan 2016 (the SADMPP) which seek to maintain the rural character of the Borough and ensure that development responds to the context and character of West Norfolk. The proposal would also fail to accord with SADMPP Policy DM5 which allows for replacement dwellings only where it would be high quality and would preserve the character and appearance of the area. The appeal proposal would also be contrary to the NPPF at paragraph 127 which requires development to be sympathetic to local character and maintain a strong sense of place and at paragraph 170 which requires the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside to be recognised.
12. Notwithstanding the sustainability credentials of the building proposed, given the wider environmental harm identified to the local character it would not comprise sustainable development for which there is a presumption for at Policy DM1 of the SADMPP.
13. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

David Spencer

Inspector.