



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 June 2019

by V Bond LLB (Hons) Solicitor (Non-Practising)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 June 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/19/3224233

Three Cliffs, Bere Court Road, Pangbourne, Reading RG8 8JY

- 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 Geoff Finch against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02098/FULD, dated 24 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 19 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is described as 'retention of existing house. Demolition of existing barn building and greenhouse. Division of the plot to allow for the construction of a new family dwelling and garage. New double garage outbuilding for the existing house and associated works to the driveway'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The Council does not take issue with the proposed garages and I have no reason to disagree with that assessment. The main issues are therefore the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, with particular regard to outlook; and whether the proposed development would be in an accessible location.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site falls within the ownership of the dwelling at Three Cliffs and is located within the AONB. Properties in the immediate area, though showing some variation in design, are generally characterised by their generous plot sizes, with a number being of relatively modest scale, or largely screened from the road. This contributes to a sense of an open and rural character. The proposed development would divide the existing plot and would replace the existing barn building with a dwelling of significantly greater scale. The positioning of the proposed dwelling to the rear of the existing access means that it would be clearly visible from the road. Although on a similar footprint to the existing building, it would be of greater height than the existing barn, with its high eaves resulting in a bulky appearance. As such, it would materially detract from the sense of spaciousness and rurality in this part of the AONB.
4. The design is intended to reflect the design of the existing building and to assimilate into the woodland setting as a stimulating alternative to the more

traditional buildings in the area. It would be fairly well screened from the north by the existing trees and both the proposed and existing dwelling would have good-sized gardens. These aspects do not overcome my fundamental concerns related to the harm that would result to the open character of the area, which would be apparent in views from the road. On this basis, the proposal does not represent an appropriate form of innovation in the terms of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (2019).

5. I therefore conclude on the first main issue that the proposed dwelling would harm the character and appearance of the AONB. It would conflict in this way with Policies CS14 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2012) (CS) which seek to ensure respect for the character and appearance of the area and the conservation of local distinctiveness. Similar objectives contained within the West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Documents: Quality Design: Part 1 Achieving Quality Design and the West Berkshire Supplementary Planning Document: Quality Design: Part 2 Residential Development (2006), would also not be met.

Living conditions

6. The proposed house would sit very close to the boundaries with two existing dwellings known as Clayesmore and South Stonehams Cottage. Both of these properties have reasonably sized gardens and are presently screened by existing hedges along the boundary. However, the proposed house would be significantly taller than the existing barn building, with the height of its eaves meaning that there would be a good deal of massing above the level of the existing hedges. As such, given the height and bulk of the proposed dwelling, it would have an overbearing effect on the outlook from these dwellings.
7. I therefore find as regards the second main issue that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants, with particular regard to outlook. In this respect, it would conflict with Policy CS14 of the CS which seeks good design, and with the aims of the revised Framework 2019 related to protecting residential amenity.

Location

8. The appeal site is located outside of any settlement boundary and so is in the open countryside for policy purposes. The appeal site is though immediately adjacent to the settlement boundary for Pangbourne. As such, although the proposed development would not be in accordance with the Council's settlement hierarchy, in practical terms, it would have almost exactly the same access to local services and facilities as houses adjacent which are in the settlement boundary.
9. As such, on the third main issue, I find that the proposed development would be in an accessible location. Although it would not comply with Policy ADDP1, ADPP5 and CS1 of the CS and Policy C1 of the Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (2017), it would accord with the aims of these policies related to directing development to accessible locations.

Other Matters

10. The proposal would offer an additional unit of windfall residential accommodation on garden land and in the context of local and national policy seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing. It seeks to make efficient

use of the existing site and would be individually designed and intended as a highly energy efficient home, with apparently high local demand for such properties. These factors weigh modestly in favour of the proposal. Full details have not been provided in respect of other permissions cited in order for me to form a detailed comparison with the present proposal, which I have considered on its merits.

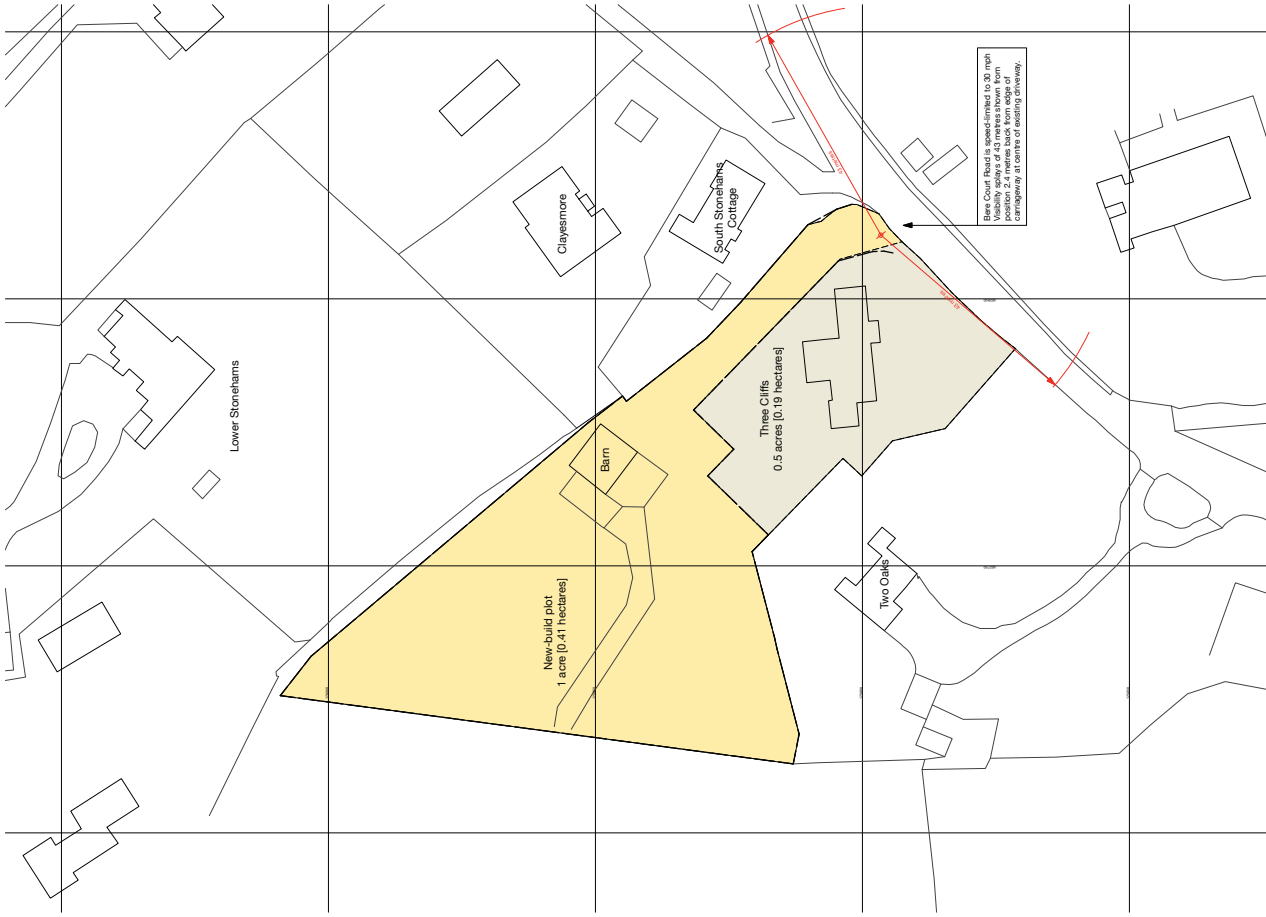
Conclusion

11. The proposal would offer some modest benefits as outlined and would be in a relatively accessible location. However, it would result in harm to the character and appearance of the AONB and to the living conditions of neighbouring occupants. The benefits offered would not outweigh the harm identified and I find that the proposal would not accord with the development plan, read as a whole and would not represent the sustainable development in respect of which the revised Framework creates a presumption in favour. For the above reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, the appeal does not succeed.

V Bond

INSPECTOR

PLANNING HISTORY (APPLICATION 18/02098/FULD)

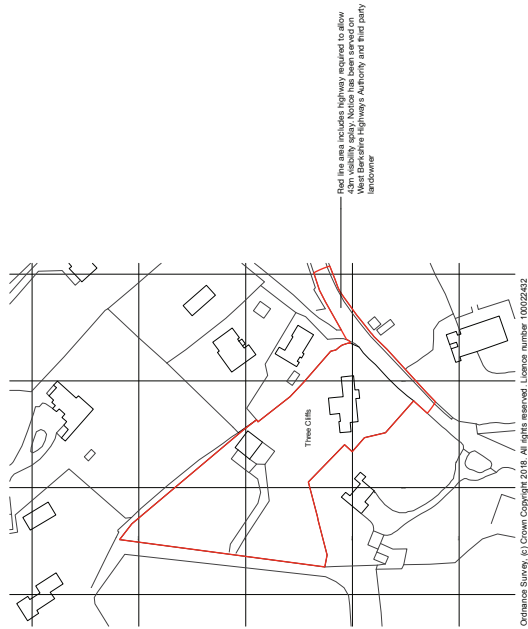


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Proposed plot division (also showing vehicular access visibility splays)
Scale 1:500



PLANNING HISTORY (APPLICATION 18/02098/FULD)



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Location plan
Scale 1:1250

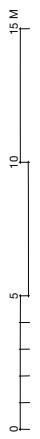


PLANNING HISTORY (APPLICATION 18/02098/FULD)

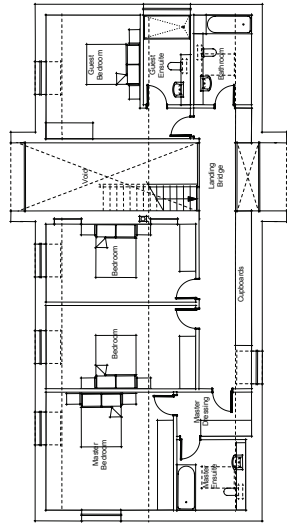


NOTE - this plan is based on information from Brunel Surveys Ltd, not OS Data

PLANNING HISTORY (APPLICATION 18/02098/FULD)



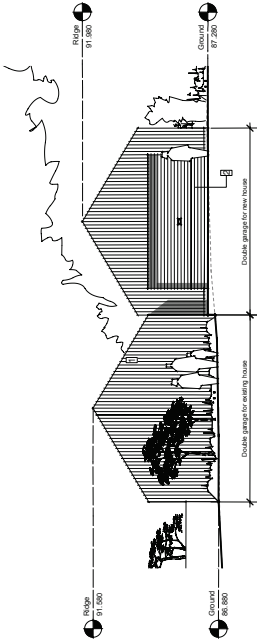
Ground Floor Plan
NOTE - this plan is based on information from Brunel Surveys Ltd, not OS Data



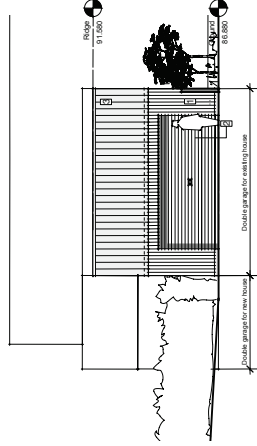
First Floor Plan

Materials key

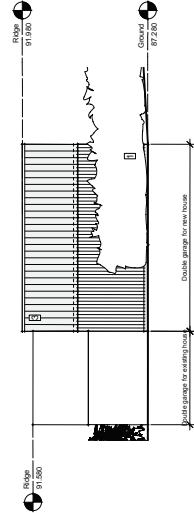
1. Vertical timber slat cladding
2. Horizontal timber cladding to garage doors
3. Standing seam metal roof



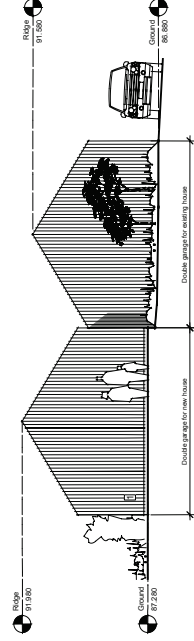
North East Elevation



South East Elevation



North West Elevation



South West Elevation

