

KINTBURY 13/00109	The Willows, Hamstead Marshall	Barn extension to house 100 breeding ewes, 30 goats and 15 pigs	Delegated Refusal	Allowed 31.12.13
Pins Ref 2203163	Mr R Canning			

Main Issue

The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and setting of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

The appeal site consists of an agricultural holding of approximately 2.8 hectares (7 acres) adjoining a small wood and in the vicinity of a farmstead, Mason's Farm. Adjoining its vehicular access stands a modern pole barn which at the time of the Inspector's site visit was being used as sheep pens, hay storage and a farm office. The site lies within a part of the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) characterised essentially by an irregular pattern of small woods often in proximity to sporadic farmsteads.

The proposal entails the lengthening the existing barn along the road frontage and upon a hardstanding currently used for the open storage of hay. The proposed pole barn would be open to the front and comprise timber boarding on its side and rear elevations under a shallow pitched roof of corrugated steel with a maximum height of approximately 3.2 metres. Its constructional materials and design would match those of the existing barn although its L-shaped footprint would entail it having a greater side profile.

Public views of the proposal would be restricted to a glimpse of its end elevation by thick roadside vegetation and tree groups. The degree by which the proposal would be screened and its modest height would not result in it having an overbearing impact upon its surroundings or the road frontage. Nor would the proposal impinge upon a current view of open countryside seen through the appellant's vehicular access from the road. It would reflect the pattern of development in the area of agricultural buildings standing in the vicinity of woodland or within reasonably compact farmsteads. The Inspector recognised that the appeal site lies within the North Wessex Downs AONB which is a nationally designated landscape sensitive to change. He acknowledged also that the combination of the existing barn and the proposal would result in a lengthy structure. However, only a short section of the proposal would be seen clearly from outside of the appeal site limiting its visual impact upon the surrounding area to an acceptable degree.

For these reasons he found that the proposal would conserve and enhance the character and setting of this part of the North Wessex Downs AONB. Such an appropriate, extended agricultural building would also reflect local distinctiveness and would therefore accord with Policies CS 14 and CS 19 of the 2012 West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) and the National Planning Policy Framework which combine to seek high quality and sustainable design that respects and enhances the character and appearance of an area.

Conditions

The standard time limit condition is required and he imposed a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt and to ensure a satisfactory development. He also imposed a condition requiring that the development is constructed of materials to match those of the existing barn to protect the character and appearance of the surroundings. However, he did not consider that the conditions suggested by the Council regarding the protection of adjoining trees are necessary given their distance from the proposal and the proposed method of construction which minimises ground works.

Decision

The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a barn extension to house 100 breeding ewes, 30 goats and 15 pigs at The Willows, Hamstead Marshall, Berkshire, RG20 0HT in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 13/00109/FUL, dated 15 January 2013 subject to the following conditions:

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin no later than three years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Drawing Nos RC/01 and RC/02 dated 12 January 2013.
- 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the extension hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building.

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