



## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2018

**by R Norman BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 23 July 2018**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Z2505/W/18/3196552**

**Redundant Office, Field View, Fen Road, Boston, Lincs PE20 1SD**

- 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 Mick Vines against the decision of Boston Borough Council.
  - The application Ref B/17/0424, dated 16 October 2017, was refused by notice dated 19 December 2017.
  - The development proposed is describes as convert office and extend existing redundant office to provide a two bedroom chalet bungalow.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside and whether the appeal site would be an appropriate location for a new dwelling.

### Reasons

3. The appeal site is located off Fen Road and comprises a vacant building which was formerly used as an office. The Appellant states that the building has been vacant for 6 – 7 years approximately and at the time of my visit the windows were boarded up. The building is modest in size and the site has an existing access and is bounded by trees and hedging. The appeal site is adjacent to an existing dwelling, Field View.
4. The proposed development would convert and extend the existing building to provide a 2 bedroomed dwelling. The proposed dwelling would be a chalet style property and would utilise the existing access.
5. The appeal site is located adjacent to an existing dwelling. The surrounding area comprises of predominantly open countryside. To the North West are sporadic dwellings running towards Swineshead Road where residential development then becomes more established. The appeal site is clearly detached from the main built up settlement.
6. Policy CO1 of the Boston Borough Local Plan (1999) (Local Plan) states that development will not be permitted in the countryside unless is it supported by other local plan policies. Policy CO7 of the Local Plan relates to the conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use in the countryside. It contains a

range of criteria to be met in order for developments in rural locations to be supported. These criteria include that the building is of an architectural quality and interest which is worthy of retention, other non-residential uses have been investigated and shown to be unviable or unsatisfactory, the building is largely intact and will not involve substantial extension or rebuilding, it will not detrimentally alter the character or appearance of the building, its setting or the area, there will be no loss of habitat and there would be no harm as a result of nearby existing uses. This policy also states that exceptions will be made for conversions which would provide accommodation to meet the needs of a rural enterprise.

7. Paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that, in rural areas, housing should be located where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. It also indicates that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances. The Framework does not define isolated, however the 2017 Braintree District Council High Court Judgement <sup>1</sup> considers that isolated should be taken as “far away from other places, buildings or people; remote”.
8. Furthermore, paragraph 55 of the Framework supports the conversion of redundant or disused buildings for use as residential where it would lead to an enhancement of the immediate setting. The proposed development would provide a chalet style dwelling, which would not be out of keeping with the nearby properties, however it would significantly alter the existing scale and appearance of the building.
9. The existing building is vacant but still appears to be in a good state of repair, with services already connected given its previous office use. However, the proposed extensions to the property would significantly increase the size of the building, and would add an upper floor to provide a chalet dwelling. The existing building is modest in size and provides an office, toilet and entrance hall, however the extensions would more than double the footprint of the building, as well as adding an upper floor, and as such would represent a substantial extension over and above the existing building. Furthermore, whilst the building is in a good state of repair it is simple in design and is not of a high architectural quality which is worthy of retention.
10. I understand the wish of the Appellants to downsize, and I have given moderate weight to the fact that there is an existing building present on the site with services already connected. Nevertheless, the site is located in a rural area and is clearly detached from any main settlement. Furthermore, the proposed development would involve significant alterations to the existing building and whilst the appeal site is already developed, the significant alterations to the building would change the nature and appearance of the appeal site within its rural setting.
11. Accordingly, I find that the proposed development would significantly alter the character and appearance of the building and character of the surrounding countryside, and would be in a location that is detached from any nearby services and facilities which would not provide an appropriate location for new housing. The proposed development therefore fails to comply with Policies G1,

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<sup>1</sup> Braintree District Council c (1) Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, (2) Greyread Limited and (3) Granville Developments Limited [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin).

CO1 and CO7 of the Local Plan and Paragraph 55 of the Framework. These collectively seek to protect the countryside from unacceptable development.

**Conclusion**

12. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*R Norman*

INSPECTOR