

5g 3/11/1932/FP - Construction of a replacement barn with alteration to the vehicle access to the barn yard at The Gage, Bucks Alley, Little Berkhamsted Hertford SG13 8LR for Mr David Carr

Date of Receipt: 25.11.11

Type: Full – Minor

Parish: LITTLE BERKHAMSTED

Ward: HERTFORD – RURAL SOUTH

RECOMMENDATION:

That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. Three year time limit (1T12)
2. Approved plans (2E10) Plan Ref: 1, Plan No 1, 13828-PL and 13838-SU
3. Samples of materials (2E12)
4. Prior to the first use of the development hereby permitted, the modified vehicle access shall be constructed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority and surfaced in bituminous material for 1.0m into the site, measured from the highway boundary and arrangements shall be made for surface water from the site to be intercepted and disposed of separately so that it does not discharge to the highway.

Reason: To ensure the access is constructed to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority to avoid the carriage of material or surface water into the adjacent highway in accordance with policy ENV21 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

5. The use of the barn hereby permitted shall be restricted solely to agricultural storage; the storage of landscape maintenance equipment or for private domestic storage and for no other purpose whatsoever without the prior consent in writing of the local planning authority.

Reason: To meet the particular needs of the applicant and to ensure that no alternative use is made of the premises that would be detrimental to the Green Belt in accordance with policies GBC1 and ENV1 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007.

Directive:

1. Other legislation 01OL

Summary of Reasons for Decision

The proposal has been considered with regard to the policies of the Development Plan (East of England Plan May 2008, Hertfordshire County Structure Plan, Minerals Local Plan, Waste Local Plan and the saved policies of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007), and in particular policies GBC1, ENV1, ENV21 and policy HE10 of PPG5: Planning for the Historic Environment. The balance of the considerations having regard to those policies and the particular history of this site is that permission should be granted.

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1.0 Background:

- 1.1 The application site is shown on the attached OS extract. It is situated on the northern side of Bucks Alley within the Metropolitan Green Belt in an isolated rural location surrounded by open fields and woodland. It is bounded to the north east and south by agricultural fields, to the west at a distance are the residential dwellings on Bucks Alley, beyond this to the south west is the village of Little Berkhamsted.
- 1.2 The site was once a working farm, but is now mainly in residential use according to the submitted Planning Statement. Some of the outbuildings at the site are used for storage purposes and a former barn at the site, destroyed by fire damage was, until then, rented by a Landscape gardener to store landscape gardening and agricultural equipment for use both on this site and elsewhere.
- 1.3 The application proposes the replacement of the destroyed barn with a new building which would cover the same floor area and would be of a similar height, constructed with a steel truss roof, with steel corrugated cladding sheet for the roof, with a brick plinth and cladding to the elevations.
- 1.4 The front brick wall on the east side of the entrance would be demolished and the vehicle entrance to the barn enlarged from 3.35m to 4.80m to provide better site access from the adjacent rural lane for agricultural equipment. The front elevation of the new barn, facing the lane would be constructed in steel cladding with matching gates attached to the existing boundary wall.
- 1.5 The building is intended, as before, to be used for the storage of landscape gardening and agricultural equipment, and for private domestic storage.

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2.0 Site History:

2.1 There is no previous planning history for the site. It is presumed that the barns have been used for agricultural purposes, when the site was a working farm. The site is now largely in residential use and the various outbuildings/ barns used for domestic storage purposes and the landscape gardening business referred to.

3.0 Consultation Responses:

3.1 The Council's Conservation Officer comments that the overall setting of the heritage assets, of the Grade II listed farmhouse and the main curtilage listed barn to the east will be improved by the removal of the previous structures which were of no special interest, of poor construction and appearance, out of keeping with the character of the adjacent heritage assets. The replacement structure is considered to relate well to the heritage asset.

3.2 County Highways does not wish to restrict the grant of permission subject to the inclusion of conditions for details of the surfacing of the modified vehicle access, and arrangements for surface water drainage from the site to be intercepted and disposed of separately to prevent discharge into the highway. In a highway context the proposal is not significant accessed from a lightly trafficked rural carriageway, and the widening of the access provides for easier access for vehicles. Traffic generation is unlikely to increase.

4.0 Parish Council Representations:

4.1 Little Berkhamsted Parish Council have no objections to the proposed application.

5.0 Other Representations:

5.1 The applications have been advertised by way of press notice, site notice and neighbour notification.

5.2 No letters of representation have been received.

6.0 Policy:

6.1 The relevant 'saved' Local Plan policies in this application include the following:

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GBC1	Green Belt
ENV1	Design and Environmental Quality
ENV2	Landscaping

- 6.2 In addition, the following National policy guidance is relevant:-
Planning Policy Guidance 2: Green Belts
Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment

7.0 Considerations:

- 7.1 The main determining issue in this case relates to whether the proposal is appropriate development within the Green belt, where the aims and objectives of policy are placed firmly on growth restraint. A number of other issues need to be considered, as set out below. The overall judgement that needs to be made is whether harm to the green belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by the weight that can be assigned to these other matters.

Green Belt

- 7.2 Within the Green Belt, under the provisions of policy GBC1, permission will not normally be given for the construction of new buildings or changes of use, other than for those listed under the policy as appropriate development. The proposal does not fall within any of these exception categories and constitutes “inappropriate” development within the Metropolitan Green Belt. It therefore needs to be considered whether there are any other material planning considerations to which such weight can be attached as to clearly outweigh harm to the Green Belt and any other harm and thereby constitute the ‘very special circumstances’ required to justify a departure from Green Belt policy.

Other issues

- 7.3 Design and appearance: The proposed replacement barn would be constructed in materials and external finish commensurate with an agricultural barn in a rural locality. The barn will be of a functional design and appearance with brick plinth base and steel cladding to the exterior elevations. In your Officer’s view the form, design and scale of the new barn is similar to the previous structure, but with an improved roof structure that compliments and relates sympathetically to the adjacent main barn and the group of original farm buildings. The new barn will assimilate easily into the farmstead group, on the original footprint and therefore would not be likely to have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the rural locality or distance views of the site. It will cause no harm in this respect.

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- 7.4 Access: The alteration to the front vehicle access is quite minor and will, as widened, facilitate better access by vehicles to the yard and barn. Highways officers have no objection to the proposed replacement barn or widened access subject to conditions. Officers consider the conditions relating to surface water management and hard surfaces to be reasonable and necessary as attached to the recommendation. No harm is caused.
- 7.5 Neighbour amenity: Officers are satisfied that given the location of the replacement barn in relation to neighbouring residential properties, the nearest of which is some 200m away, the proposed development will not unduly impact upon any neighbouring properties in terms of loss of privacy, outlook or general amenity.
- 7.6 Setting of heritage assets: The proposed replacement barn would be of a slightly altered roof profile to the previous barn which provided three rather awkward and intrusive roof forms. The officers consider that the proposed roof form is of a simple functional design and overall the setting of the heritage assets on the site (the listed farmhouse and curtilage listed barn) will be improved by the replacement structure. To safeguard the quality of the proposed external cladding of the replacement barn which would be in proximity to the weatherboard curtilage listed barn, a condition requiring further details of the external cladding material is recommended.
- 7.7 Existing use: As indicated above, the former building at the site has been in use partially for a landscape gardening business and for domestic purposes. There is no recorded planning history so it is anticipated that these uses have commenced without the benefit of planning permission. They may have been in place for such a period of time that they are now immune from planning control and, in any event, limited commercial reuse of redundant agricultural buildings is supported by the Councils planning policies. A new building will enable this commercial use to continue and the limited economic benefit that it brings is assigned positive weight.

Summary

- 7.8 In summary then it is considered that the development is inappropriate in green belt terms. In terms of other harm, this is considered to be very limited, or none at all. With regard to the weight that can be assigned to the positive aspects of the proposal, the new build proposed is the same scale as that which has been demolished and the design is improved. In this respect it has no greater impact on the openness of the green belt than the previous building did. It is an improvement in design terms,

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improves the setting of the heritage asset and provides a modest element of economic development. Given the modest harm in this case, it is considered that weight can be assigned to positive factors such that very special circumstances can be considered to be demonstrated in this case.

8.0 Conclusion:

- 8.1 It is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted subject to the conditions outlined at the start of this report.