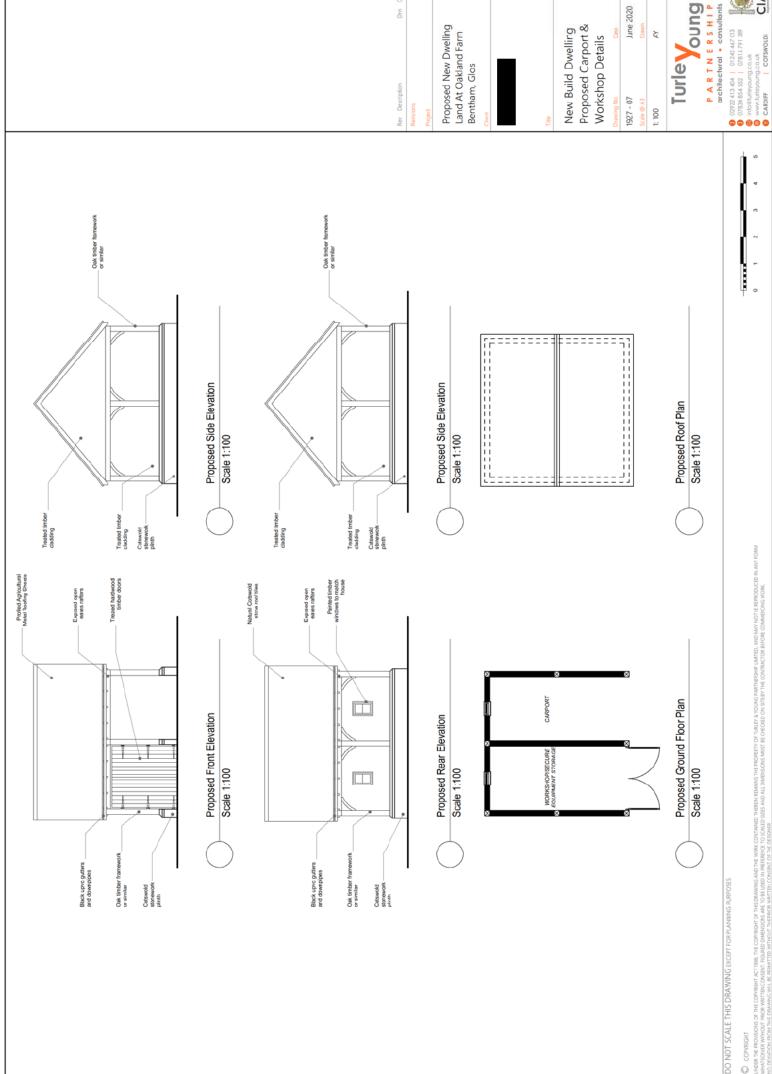


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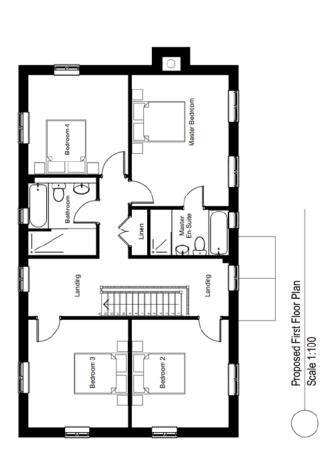
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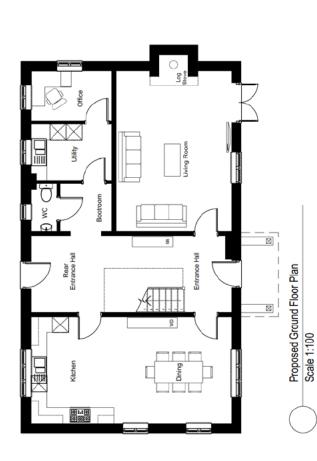
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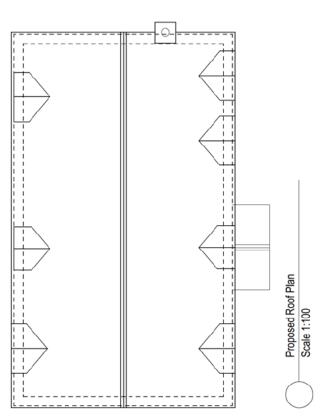
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Proposed New Dwelling Land At Oakland Farm Bentham, Glos



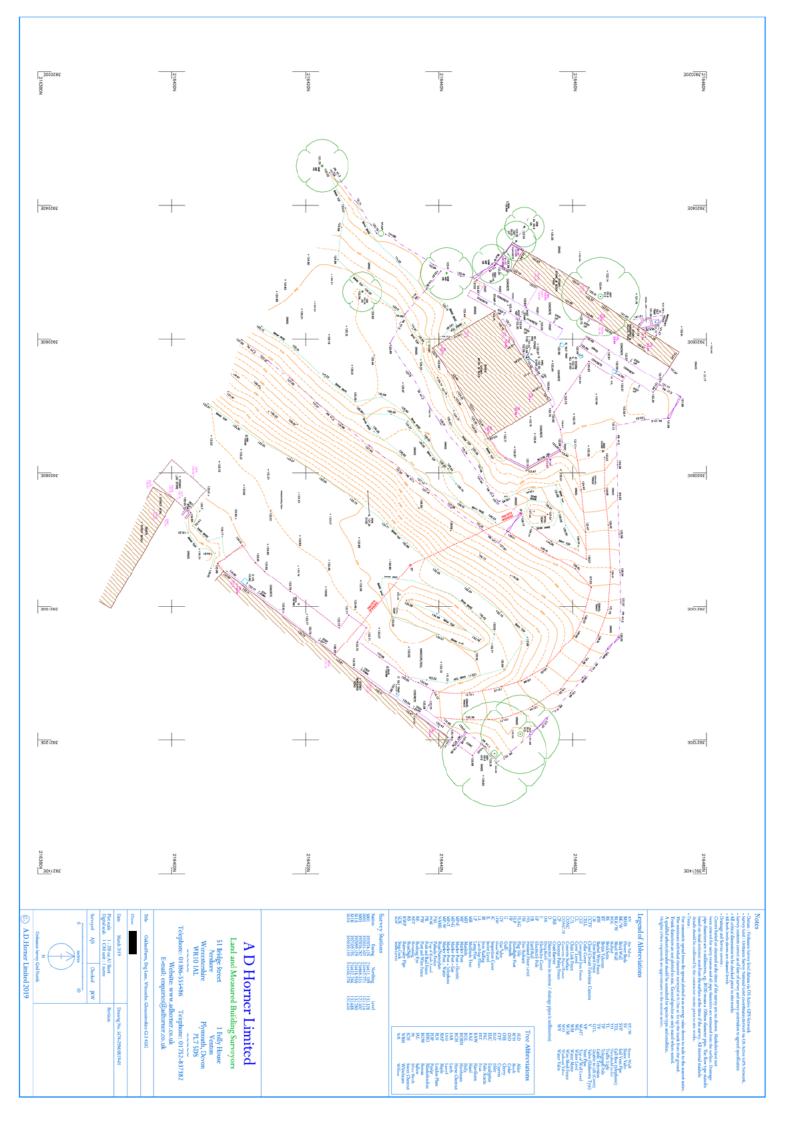
Proposed Floor Plans New Build Dwelling

June 2020 1927 - 05



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PLANNING AND

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 August 2007

by R J Yuille Msc Dip TP MRTPI

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

The Planning Inspectorate 4/11 Eagle Wing Temple Quay House 2 The Square Temple Quay Bristol BS1 6PN

Date: 17 September 2007

Appeal Ref: APP/G1630/A/07/2045382 Oaklands Farm Barns, Dog Lane, Witcombe, GL3 4UG

- 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 against the decision of Tewkesbury Borough Council.
- The application Ref: 06/00486/FUL, dated 03/04/06, was refused by notice dated 14/11/06.
- The development proposed is a new dwelling to replace an existing redundant barn.

Decision

I dismiss the appeal.

Background

2. There are three buildings on the appeal site. It is proposed to demolish the largest of these, a block built barn clad in corrugated iron and replace it with a four bedroom house. In order to get more sunlight and to achieve a practical form of construction the proposed house would be located in a different, but overlapping, position to the existing building. A row of pig pens of rendered block construction with a corrugated iron roof would be altered to form a 5 bay car port. A single storey cattle byre built of Cotswold stone and brick with a clay tile roof would be retained.

Main Issues

3. The appeal site is in the Green Belt and the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). That being so I consider the main issue in this appeal to be whether the appeal scheme would be inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, if it would, whether there are any very special circumstances which would outweigh the harm that this would cause to the Green Belt and any other harm it would cause to the AONB, to highway safety and to the aim of avoiding development that would be unduly reliant on the private car.

Reasons

Green Belt

4. Policy GB.1 of the Gloucestershire Structure Plan Second Review (the Structure Plan) and Planning Policy Guidance 2; Green Belts set out a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt. Policy GRB1 of the Tewkesbury Local Plan to 2011 (the Local Plan) makes clear that new

buildings will only be permitted where they are for a number of specified purposes. The proposed dwelling, which would be for general purpose housing, does not fall into any of these categories and would, therefore, be inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

- Inappropriate development is by definition harmful to the Green Belt. Very special circumstances to justify such development will not exist unless the harm by reason of inappropriateness, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.
- 6. In essence the very special circumstances advanced by the appellant are that a dilapidated barn would be removed and replaced with a less imposing house and this would cause less harm to the Green Belt than the building it would replace. The first point to make in connection with this approach is that dilapidated farm buildings in the countryside are commonplace and that any argument based on the removal of such buildings is not, therefore, very special in the sense that it is unusual or uncommon.
- 7. Moreover, I am not satisfied that the proposed building would be beneficial to the openness of the Green Belt. The existing buildings on the site are substantial structures but the main building is cut into a steep slope which reduces its visual impact as does the green colour of its corrugated sheeting. All the buildings on the site are seen in the context of the nearby farm group and while they are in a dilapidated condition they are of a type of construction commonly to be found in the countryside. These factors mean that the buildings have only a limited effect on the openness of the Green Belt.
- 8. According to the appellant's unchallenged calculation the appeal scheme would lead to a 40% or so reduction in the developed area of the site and the majority of the existing hardstanding on the site would be removed. These are factors that weigh in favour of the appeal scheme. The improvement of the track serving the site, if done in appropriate materials, need amount to no more than the reinstatement of the stone track that is already in place; this, therefore, is a neutral point in the equation.
- 9. On the other hand the proposed house would be considerably taller than the barn that it would replace (8.5 metres as compared to 5 metres) and, while the extent of the curtilage of the proposed house has not been defined I, like the Council, consider that any house on the site would bring with it an inevitable accumulation of domestic paraphernalia. These factors, together with the proposal to site the house marginally further from the shelter of the bank than the existing barn, would make the building more prominent than the existing buildings when seen from fields to the north and from the higher ground within the existing farm group.
- 10. I accept that neither the existing nor the proposed buildings would be easily seen from nearby public viewpoints but this on its own would not be a reason to grant planning permission for the appeal scheme. Such an argument could be made too often and if successful would, cumulatively, undermine the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.
- 11. On balance I consider that the increased height and prominence of the proposed house would outweigh the benefit of reducing the footprint of

- buildings on the site. I do not, therefore, consider that the appeal scheme would lead to an increase in the openness of the Green Belt.
- 12. In coming to this view I have taken account of the appellant's willingness to exclude the car ports from the appeal scheme and or to remove the pig pens on which they would be based. However, this would have only a limited impact on the appeal scheme as a whole and would not alleviate my principal concerns about the scheme which relate to the proposed house on the site.
- 13. I do not, therefore, consider that points put forward by the appellant amount to very special circumstances that clearly outweigh the harm that the proposed development would cause to the Green Belt by reason of its inappropriateness and its effect on openness. It would, therefore, conflict with the aims of Structure Plan Policy GB.1 and Local Plan Policy GRB1.

AONB

14. Structure Plan Policy NHE.4 and Local Plan Policy LND1 give priority to the conservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape in the AONB. For the reasons set out above when considering Green Belt matters I do not consider that the appeal scheme, which would lead to the construction of a taller more prominent building on the site, would meet this end.

Highway Safety

15. The junction between the appeal site and the lane that serves it, Dog Lane, is poorly surfaced, steep and acutely angled. Dog Lane itself is in places narrow, steep and twisting. Forward visibility is limited on some sections of the lane and for considerable stretches it is not possible for oncoming vehicles to pass; there are, moreover, no proper passing bays. Dog Lane leads to Bentham Lane and thence to the junction with the A46 where traffic emerging from Bentham Lane has restricted visibility. The proposal to locate an additional house on a site with such severe limitations on its access would, I consider, be contrary to the aims of Local Plan Policy TPT1 which seeks to ensure that development does not adversely affect the safety or satisfactory operation of the highway network.

Car Usage

- 16. The aim of reducing the need to travel, especially by car, is set out in, amongst other places, Structure Plan Policy T.1. The appeal site is in the open countryside well away from any settlement as defined in the Local Plan. Although the appellant disputes this, I, like the Council, regard the site as being in a remote location in that it is not within easy walking distance (normally taken to be some 600m or so) of shops schools or other facilities.
- 17. The site is, moreover, almost 2 kilometres (1.2 miles) from the nearest bus stop and although this may have been used by the appellant and his family in the past I consider the distances involved and the narrow, unlit nature of the intervening lanes with their lack of footways or useful verges would deter most walkers while their steepness would be a powerful disincentive to cyclists.
- 18. I am satisfied, therefore, that the appeal scheme would run counter to the aims of Structure Plan Policy T.1 in that it would not minimise the length or number of car journeys or encourage the use of public transport, walking and cycling.

Conclusions

- 19. I acknowledge that this is an opportunity for the appellant to build a house at a price he can afford. However, the term affordable housing, when used in a planning context, assumes that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that such affordability is passed on to subsequent occupiers. No such mechanism has been put forward in this instance. Nonetheless, I recognise that the appeal scheme would be an opportunity for the appellant to live in an area in which he has close local links and where his proposals have received support from local people.
- 20. However, the appeal site is in the Green Belt where there is a strong presumption against inappropriate development such as that proposed. I am not satisfied that the arguments in support of the appeal scheme are in themselves very special nor do I consider that the appeal scheme would be beneficial in that it would improve the openness of the Green Belt. Furthermore, it would not conserve or enhance the natural beauty of the landscape in the AONB, it would have an adverse effect on highway safety and it would run counter to the aim of reducing reliance on the private car. The proposed development would, therefore conflict with the aims of the development plan policies set out above.
- 21. For these reasons and having regard to all other matters raised, including the Council's reference to the fact that the site is in the open countryside a matter that I deal with when considering Green Belt I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Inspector

Notes

This drawing is based on plans supplied by the property owner DO NOT SCALE OFF THIS DRAWING

All dimensions to be checked on site by the contractor prior to commencement

Revisions

A Navised in accordance with client's romments 19.12.05

8 Revised in accordance with dient's comments 04.01.06

C Revised in accordance with client's comments 03.02.06

PROPOSED NEW DWELLING AT OAKLAND FARMS BARNS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES 10 APR 2006 Project Scanned:-. Rec'd Officer.-... Ack'd ... Aris'd... File Bedroom 2 Bedroom 3 Landing Bedroom 1 G G S Bedroom 4

D mc C

Cpq

Hall

Living

Utility Conts. First Floor Plan

Ground Floor Plan

Office

DECEMBER 2005

Date Title

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Scale Client

PROPOSED FLOOR PLANS

Dwg No 109/06C

06/00486

