
Wrotham Wrotham	562554 158915	01.07.2005	TM/05/02062/FL
Proposal:	Erection of new dwelling to appear as relocation of Coach House and conversion to 3 bedroom dwelling		
Location:	Little Nepicar London Road Wrotham Sevenoaks Kent TN15 7RR		
Applicant:	Mr D Nokes		

1. Description:

1.1 The proposal seeks planning permission for a new dwellinghouse although it has been described by the applicant as the relocation of a coach house. The coach house has planning permission to be converted into residential accommodation. The proposed new dwelling would be served by the existing access onto the A20 London Road. The proposed position would be within the residential curtilage of the coach house conversion approved under TM/03/03540/FL.

1.2 The applicant has submitted a claim of very special circumstances, based upon the following:

- *the proposed new location will improve the openness of the Green Belt, in accordance with Policy P2/16;*
- *The proposal will not result in the creation of a new residential property. This proposal is merely the relocation, re-election of an existing property;*
- *The proposed new location will enhance the AONB and SLA by closing off views of the existing petrol station on London Road, in accordance with Policies P3/5 & P3/6; and*
- *The existing building is of exceptional quality and architectural merit, and warrants re-use and conserving. Relocating it will allow it to be viable as a dwelling, which will ensure it does not remain derelict, which in itself constitutes a special circumstance, as outlined in Paragraph 11 of PPS7.*

2. The Site:

2.1 The site is situated within the MGB, AONB and SLA and outside the rural settlement confines of Wrotham and Wrotham Heath. The site lies on the north-eastern side of London Road and is set back from the public highway. The Coach House stands within the curtilage of a large detached dwelling at Little Nepicar. The Coach House stands approximately 1m above the height of the public highway. The Coach House appears to have been subject to some substantial rebuilding works in the past few years, as the rear and first floor elements have been completely rebuilt, while the whole building has been reclad with weatherboarding and retiled in plain clay tiles.

3. Planning History:

- 3.1 TM/05/00392/FL Withdrawn 15.04.2005
Relocation of existing Coach House.
- 3.2 TM/03/03540/FL Approved 06.01.2004
Proposed change of use of existing coach house to form new 3 bedroom accommodation.
- 3.3 TM/03/00205/FL Approved 14.05.2003
Demolition of existing building and construction of two storey side extension (amended scheme to that submitted under planning ref. TM/02/01356/FL).
- 3.4 TM/02/01356/FL Approved 21.08.2002
Demolition of existing building and construction of new 2 storey side extension - resubmission to TM/02/00269/FL.
- 3.5 TM/02/00269/FL Refused 26.03.2002
Demolition of existing buildings and construction of new two storey extension.

4. Consultees:

- 4.1 PC: Provided that the building is relocated in the form agreed under reference TM/03/03540 and provided that any newly introduced building materials match the existing ones, there is no objection.
- 4.2 KCC (Highways): No objections.
- 4.3 KCC (Arch): The site lies within an area of archaeological interest. No objections, subject to conditions.
- 4.4 Private Reps: 6/0S/0X/2R. Two responses received, objecting on the following grounds:
- The site is mature farmland, typical of the majority of Wrotham. The character of the site would be destroyed by the proposal.
 - Under Local Plan policy P6/12, the proposal would upset the harmony of the rural appearance.
 - The existing buildings would be made larger and there would be a change of use.
 - The current house was 2 buildings. The application may be a scam to build a house and leave a further building on the site.
 - The amount and type of buildings would be materially harmful to the environment.

- No account is being taken of the conservation and wildlife interests, woodland and orchard area, which would be destroyed by the proposal.
- The proposal involves the construction of a new road to an unmade single track which the applicant does not have a right of access over.
- The development would have an unacceptable impact on the character of the rural lanes and countryside.
- The proposal would alter the character and natural beauty contrary to policy P3/5.
- The site is within the MGB. The proposed development does not meet the criteria of the policy.
- The site is outside the settlement confines of the KSP.
- There are still numerous authorised plots that are undeveloped within the Wrotham Area, and therefore there is no justification for approving this development.
- A later application is likely to be made if this is approved, for an access off London Road.
- It is virtually impossible to see the petrol station from this site.
- If the existing building is of merit, is it Listed?
- Other factors may contribute to the reasoning as to why the building has not been sold.

5. Determining Issues:

- 5.1 The main determining issues associated with this application are first to establish whether the principle of the proposal is acceptable, and if so, if the siting of the dwelling and its impact on the area and on nearby neighbours is acceptable.
- 5.2 Planning permission has been granted for the conversion of a former coach house into 3 bedroom residential accommodation. Policies P6/14 and P6/15 of the TMBLP 1998 allow for the conversion of rural buildings to alternative uses such as residential. The previous application (TM/03/3540/FL) found the principle of converting the building acceptable. The main considerations with respect to the current application is whether it is appropriate to build a new building for use as a dwelling. This is not subject to the same tests as a conversion.
- 5.3 Policy RS5 of the KSP states that development will not normally be permitted in rural Kent other than at the villages and small rural towns unless it falls into one of five categories, none of which applies to the proposal.

- 5.4 The current application is not for the conversion of the existing coach house building but rather for its demolition and its reconstruction in an alternative position on the site. It does not automatically follow that because the LPA has allowed a rural building to be converted, an alternative scheme of an entirely new dwellinghouse should then be allowed. Furthermore, because the lower part of the coach house is constructed of brick and the roof is tiled, the relocation of the coach house would involve the reconstruction of the building. The erection of a new dwelling within the Green Belt is contrary to PPG2, RS5 and MGB3 of the KSP and P2/16 of the TMBLP.
- 5.5 The proposed position for the building is further from the existing dwelling and from London Road, which would be beneficial for the occupiers of that property but the proposed positioning would be more detrimental to the openness of the surrounding countryside and the Metropolitan Green Belt. I am also of the opinion that the proposed position would detract from the natural beauty and landscape of the AONB and SLA.
- 5.6 The site is set quite separate from the petrol filling station. I do not consider that there is sufficient justification for repositioning of the building to close of views of the petrol filling station. Furthermore, the building is a low-level structure, and therefore any reduction in these views will be very minimal.
- 5.7 There has been no substantial evidence submitted to suggest that the positioning of the existing building close to Little Nepicar is not allowing it to be viable as a dwelling. Furthermore, the applicant states further on within their submission that it is Little Nepicar the applicant is having difficulty selling.
- 5.8 The Council has dealt with similar proposals elsewhere in Area 2. Permission was refused and the Council's assessment upheld in the subsequent appeal. There are many parallels with the current case. The inspector stated in a recent appeal case that "it seems to me that a conversion is one thing, and a newbuild is another. In the Green Belt, permission for the former is not perforce a stepping stone to the latter".
- 5.9 It is proposed to use the existing access onto the A20 London Road. This is the access that was proposed to be used in association with the approved conversion (TM/03/03540/FL). Therefore, I am of the opinion that the use of this access would be acceptable.
- 5.10 In highway terms, the proposal will be served by adequate parking spaces and will not interfere with the existing parking provision to Little Nepicar.
- 5.11 The proposal will not result in the loss of any privacy, sunlight or background daylight to neighbouring properties.

5.12 In light of the above, I am of the opinion that the proposal would result in inappropriate development in the Green Belt and open countryside and am of the opinion that there is an insufficient case of very special circumstances to justify overriding the strong policy objections.

6. Recommendation:

6.1 Refuse Planning Permission on the following grounds:

- 1 The site lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt where there is a strong presumption against permitting inappropriate development, as defined in PPG2: Green Belts and policy MGB3 of the Kent Structure Plan 1996. The proposed development constitutes inappropriate development and is therefore contrary to policy MGB3 and also policy P2/16 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998.
- 2 The proposal is contrary to Policy RS5 of the Kent Structure Plan 1996, which states that development will not normally be permitted in rural Kent, other than at the villages and small rural towns, unless the development falls into one of the special categories listed in policy, none of which applies to the development proposed. For similar reasons, the proposed development is contrary to policy P2/16 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998.
- 3 The proposed development would be detrimental to the natural beauty of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Special Landscape Area and would thus be contrary to policy ENV3 and ENV4 of the Kent Structure Plan 1996 and policies P3/5 and P3/6 of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Local Plan 1998.
- 4 The Local Planning Authority does not consider that there is any justification, in the circumstances of the present application, for overriding the planning policy objections.

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