



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2022

by Diane Cragg Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/N2535/W/21/3279260

Stable Block, 3 Acre Field, Holt Farm, Stainton Lane, Stainton by Langworth, Lincoln LN3 5BL

- 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 & Mrs T Siddans against the decision of West Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref:142917, dated 21 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 June 2021.
 - The development proposed is change of use and extension of existing redundant stables building to form two holiday let units for farm diversification.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal site is an appropriate location for the proposed development having regard to local and national planning policies.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is in open countryside on the west side of Stainton Lane between the A158 and Stainton by Langworth. The existing stable block is a mono-pitch painted block work structure in a fenced and landscaped plot with access from Stainton Lane.
4. The proposal is to extend the existing building to provide 2 holiday cottages and provide parking and landscaping within an extended plot.
5. Policy LP55 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2017 (CLLP) relates to development in the countryside. Part A (a) supports the re-use and conversion of non-residential buildings for residential use in the countryside, provided there is evidence that the building can no longer be used for the purpose for which it was originally built or there is no demand for the use of the building for business purposes, and the building is capable of conversion with minimal alterations, and the building is of notable architect or historic merit and intrinsically worthy of retention in its setting. Part E of the policy supports non-residential development in the countryside subject to a number of criteria, and part F supports farm-based diversification provided that the proposal will support farm enterprises in an appropriate location for the use, of a scale appropriate to its location, and of a scale appropriate to the business need.
6. The Council's approach to the consideration of a 'Sustainable Visitor Economy' is set out in Policy LP7 of the CLLP. This policy, amongst other things, indicates

- that visitor facilities should be located within existing settlements unless it can be demonstrated that such locations are unsuitable for the nature of the proposal and there is an overriding benefit to the local economy and/or community and/or environment for locating away from such built up areas; or it relates to an existing visitor facility which is seeking redevelopment or expansion.
7. The policy approach is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where it states that planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable rural tourism which respects the character of the countryside. The Framework recognises that sites to meet local business and community need in rural areas may need to be found adjacent to or beyond existing settlements. In these circumstances, it will be important to ensure that development is sensitive to its surroundings and should exploit any opportunities to make a location more sustainable.
 8. In respect of Policy LP55, the proposal would require the significant alteration and extension of the structure and cannot meet the criteria set out in Part A(a). Part E relates to non-residential development and is therefore not relevant to the development. Regarding Part F, although I acknowledge that the proposal is stated as a farm diversification project, and I note the various articles provided by the appellant that support farm diversification, there is limited evidence as to how the diversification would support the farm enterprise and little evidence that the scale of the development is appropriate to the business need.
 9. In terms of Policy LP7 the scheme does not relate to an existing visitor facility. The appellant states that the building's location on the farm is intrinsic to its marketing and use for farm holidays. A location elsewhere would not serve this purpose, and this is an overriding element of the proposal. However, the building is some distance from the farmhouse and farm buildings and there is little information as to how the development would promote farm holidays.
 10. Nevertheless, based on the letters of support and the appellant's own research the occupation of the holiday cottages could contribute to supporting other local attractions or visitors to the area. Further, the proposal could generate short term employment during the construction phase of the development and indirect jobs associated with the operation of the holiday let business. In this respect the development could support the local economy and community.
 11. However, whilst in considering the location of development the Framework takes some account of the transport shortcomings of rural areas its focus is on maximising the use of sustainable transport solutions. There is no footpath along Stainton Lane and the national speed limit of 60 mph applies. The development would be physically isolated from settlements with facilities and services both in terms of distance and the absence of routes to them, or anywhere else, by means other than private motor vehicle. As such it would fail to meet the Framework's approach of giving priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and so far as possible, facilitating access to public transport. Consequently, the location is not suitable for the nature of the proposal.
 12. The appellant brings to my attention a site at Ashlin Farm¹. This scheme was determined against a different policy background and has limited relevance to

¹ Local Authority No:130453

the proposal. It is notable however that the Council concluded that the site was adjacent to a village and accessible, for occupiers of the holiday let accommodation, to services and facilities by other means than the car.

13. The existing building has a simple non-domestic appearance surrounded by hedge planting and post and rail fencing. It appears as an appropriate rural building and sits acceptably in the landscape.
14. In support of the use being farm diversification the appellant states that the building is redundant. The design and access statement sets out that the use of the building for cattle or horses could not be facilitated in the existing compartmentalised structure. However, the structure requires significant extension and alterations to provide for holiday accommodation and there is little evidence that the existing structure could not be altered for use as stables or marketed for such a use. There is also limited evidence that the conversion of the existing structure would not be commercially viable. As such, I am not satisfied that there would be an overriding benefit to the environment for the location of the development.
15. Overall, there is insufficient evidence to demonstrate overriding benefit to the local economy, community, or the environment for locating the development away from a built-up area.
16. Taking the above matters together, I conclude that the appeal site would not be an appropriate location for the proposed development having regard to local and national planning policies and would conflict with Policies LP7 and LP55 of the CLLP. It would also conflict with the Framework.

Other Matters

17. Reference is made to the Council's failure to request additional information during the application process. However, the appeal has presented an opportunity for the appellant to expand on the evidence provided, I have noted the details in the appeal but for the reasons I have set out I find that the proposed development would conflict with local and national policies.
18. I acknowledge the frustration caused by the failure of the Council to work with the appellant in a positive manner. However, this is not material to my determination of the appeal and does not remove the requirement for me to assess the appeal proposal on its own merits.
19. The absence of harm in relation to highway issues and drainage is a neutral matter in this appeal.

Conclusion

20. Overall, for the reasons given above, I conclude the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, that would outweigh that conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

Diane Cragg

INSPECTOR