



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2017

by **D R Cullingford BA MPhil MRTPI**

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

Decision date: 31 October 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N2535/W/17/3176779

9a Front Street, Grasby, Barnetby, Lincolnshire, DN38 6AN

- This appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is by Mr Colin Gibson against the decision of the West Lindsey District Council.
 - The application (ref: 135877 and dated 24 February 2017) was refused by notice dated 25 April 2017.
 - The development is described as an 'outline planning application to erect 1 no. two storey detached dwelling – access to be considered and not reserved for subsequent applications'.
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Decision

1. I dismiss this appeal.

Main issue

2. From what I have read and seen, I consider that this appeal turns on whether the proposal would inappropriately harm the open character of the settlement here, contrary to policies LP2 and LP4 of the recently adopted Central Lincolnshire Local Plan 2012-2036 and the guidance offered by the Framework (NPPF).

Reasons

3. Grasby is a pleasant village spread out on the lower slopes of the Wolds beneath Brigg Road (the A1084). Most of the dwellings are strung along the village streets; Vicarage Lane and Clixby Lane are aligned roughly along the contours, Church Hill and Front Street traverse the slopes and more modern development encroaches into the plains below astride Station Road. There are exceptions. Bungalows coagulate around culs-de-sac at Holland Drive and Wilmore Lane and houses are grouped around a courtyard at The Old Quarry. However, the appeal property stands on the eastern side of Front Street amongst cottages, bungalows and substantial dwellings that all face the street. The rear gardens back on to fields and farmland or to other long back gardens. Indeed, the appeal plot is part of the neat and extensive rear garden at No.9a adjoining open fields to the south and east and the long rear gardens behind the properties in Clixby Lane to the north. There are views eastwards to the Wolds: to the south, the tops of the cottages in Bentley Lane can be seen above, or between, the intervening foliage: to the north, thick hedges and some fine trees obscure all but an occasional glimpse of the properties on Clixby Lane. A footpath connecting Bentley Lane and Clixby Lane runs through the adjoining field and beside the eastern boundary of the appeal site.
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4. In 'small villages' like Grasby, small scale schemes limited to around 4 dwellings in 'appropriate locations' would normally be permitted (policy LP2). The proposal would certainly be small scale and entail only 1 additional dwelling. Moreover, as it is envisaged that the village might reasonably accommodate up to 20 additional dwellings over the Plan period and only 1 has currently materialised, the scheme would be well within the levels of growth outlined in the Plan for Grasby (policy LP4). However, it is also necessary to test whether the proposed dwelling would occupy an 'appropriate location'. For this to be so, policy LP2 indicates (amongst other things) that a scheme should not significantly harm the character and appearance of the settlement and retain its core shape and form, criteria endorsed by guidance in the Framework that development should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings while not preventing appropriate innovation.
5. The proposed dwelling, as currently illustrated, would stand some 50m behind No.9a marooned amongst surrounding open fields and long rear gardens. Its oddly isolated position would be evident from the nearby footpath, from several of the rear elevations and rear gardens of the dwellings lining Front Street and the structure would be glimpsed from the street itself through the occasional gap in the frontage development. This part of the village is open and verdant, attributes to which the appeal plot contributes. The proposed dwelling would thus represent an incongruous intrusion into the swathe of undeveloped land (either field or garden) behind Front Street reflecting neither the shape nor form of the village here and, thereby, spoiling the character and appearance of the place. I consider, therefore, that the scheme would be contrary to the Development Plan, particularly the requirements set out in policy LP2.
6. I have considered all the other matters raised. I do not agree that the driveway currently under construction to serve the garages behind the adjacent new dwellings offers any kind of precedent warranting the present proposal. The garages are not dwellings and neither they nor the driveway extend noticeably beyond the other plots in the vicinity. The appeal proposal would be quite different. Nor do I regard the appeal plot as being obviously 'enclosed'. Although hedges and trees line the northern boundary, most of that vegetation is deciduous while other boundaries do not offer particularly effective screens; indeed, it is recognised that open views through the site would still be evident from the public footpath on completion of the scheme. In any case, the proposed dwelling would not reflect the form and character evident in this part of the village. I appreciate that there is some 'development in depth' elsewhere, as indicated above. But, it is fairly limited and, importantly, located elsewhere; it could not be described accurately as a 'distinctive feature' of the place, in my view.
7. As for the decisions referred to at Snitterby and Covenham, it is acknowledged, quite properly, that such decisions are to be determined on their own merits. In this case Snitterby is a different village in a very different part of the District while Covenham is subject to different policies applied by a different Local Planning Authority. Of course a new dwelling would provide a new home and foster employment. But it is not Government policy to erect new housing anywhere. On the contrary, the Framework advises that schemes should be of 'good design' that reflect the character, identity and appearance of their surroundings. For the reasons indicated, I

am afraid that this proposal would fail to reflect that advice or comply with the statutory planning policies that apply here. Hence, I find nothing sufficiently compelling to alter my conclusion that this appeal should be dismissed.

David Cullingford
INSPECTOR