



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 October 2025

by Sarah Manchester BSc MSc PhD MEnvSc

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/N2535/W/24/3358083

**Glentworth Hall, Northlands Road, Glentworth, Gainsborough,
Lincolnshire DN21 5DL**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Group Retreats Limited against the decision of West Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref is WL/2024/00638.
 - The development proposed is change of use of dwelling and grounds to holiday let/group accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application form indicates that the change of use commenced in August 2023. Therefore, I have determined the appeal on the basis that permission is sought to retain the change of use that has already been implemented.
3. The change of use relates to a listed building. As such, I have had special regard to section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) in the determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the site is in a suitable location for the tourism accommodation, having regard to local policy for development in the countryside.

Reasons

5. Glentworth Hall is a large country house dating from around 1566 and it is a Grade II* listed building (the LB; Ref: 1063348). It is set back from Northlands Road, at the end of a long formal driveway and in grounds that extend to around 5 acres. Access and car parking for around 25 vehicles is provided at the rear via a private road. It lies in the countryside beyond the small village of Glentworth.
6. Policy SP1 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Adopted April 2023 (the LP) sets out the Council's spatial strategy. This seeks to focus development in accordance with the settlement hierarchy and to restrict development in the countryside unless for certain purposes or allowed by other local or neighbourhood plan policies. The holiday let would not be for any of the listed purposes and it falls to consideration under LP policy S5: Development in the countryside, Part E of which supports non-residential development provided it meets each of several criteria.

7. There appears to be no dispute between the parties in relation to criteria b) a suitably accessible location; c) the location would not result in conflict with neighbouring uses; and d) the size and scale of development is commensurate with the proposed use and the surrounding rural character. Taking into account the location adjacent to a small village, the distance and type of neighbouring uses, and the character and appearance of Glentworth Hall, I see no reason to disagree. Compliance with LP policy S5, and thereby the development plan, thus depends upon whether or not criterion a) is satisfied. This requires that the rural location is justifiable to maintain or enhance the rural economy or the location is justified by means of proximity to existing established businesses or natural features.
8. Glentworth Hall is not associated with any existing business. Nearby Glentworth is a small village with no shops, cafes or public houses. Beyond that, there is a convenience store roughly 2 miles away, an antique centre with coffee shop and a wedding venue (both 2.5 miles), and a public house (roughly 4 miles). Rural central Lincolnshire makes a significant contribution to the visitor economy, with many people attracted to waterways, walking and cycling routes, aviation and the Lincolnshire Wolds. However, there is little evidence that Glentworth is in proximity to any such attractions. Consequently, the location is not demonstrably justified on grounds relating to proximity to existing established businesses or natural features.
9. Although the change of use commenced in 2023, little substantive evidence has been provided to quantify or qualify the use in terms of visitors, frequency and duration of stays, occupancy rates or local spend. However, the evidence indicates that Glentworth Hall is mainly used for weekend breaks with some midweek breaks, typically by groups of up to 25, with extended family groups accounting for around 75% of bookings and 25% corporate and business use. Conversely, the third party and Parish Council representations refer to the Hall being used as a 'party space', with large and disruptive single sex hen and stag parties.
10. Irrespective, Glentworth Hall provides 10 bedrooms suitable to accommodate up to 33 people, together with dining, sitting, cinema and games rooms, and a fully equipped kitchen. External amenity space includes patio and barbeque facilities, a pool and hot tubs, and extensive private grounds. As such, the Hall provides a generous amount of internal and external living space to meet the needs of large family and friends' groups who are looking to spend quality time together, including celebrating special occasions, in a beautiful property in the countryside.
11. Away from the amenities provided by the Hall, the holiday let brochure directs visitors to shops, restaurants and supermarkets in Gainsborough and places to eat and local attractions in Lincoln. Visitor spend in this main town and city contributes to the urban economy. The evidence with the appeal refers to restaurants, cafes, post office and antique centre in the nearby villages of Harpswell and Hemswell, and a wider range of services and facilities in Ingham. While these are more local, Harpswell appears to be a parish with no facilities and it seems unlikely that holiday let visitors would provide any particular support to the post office, village hall, primary school or bus service in Ingham.
12. I accept that holiday let visitors will leave the grounds, including to walk in the local area and visit Hemswell Antique Centre. However, I am not persuaded that the large groups, who want to collectively enjoy the luxurious private setting of the Hall, would frequently or regularly break into smaller groups such as could be readily accommodated by smaller rural coffee shops or public houses. Even if they did,

there is little evidence this results in any materially greater economic support for the limited rural businesses in the area than would an ongoing residential use.

13. Some guests have used a curry house in the town of Gainsborough, but again this does not appear to support the rural economy. Guests also apparently use local caterers and chefs who come in and cook, but there is little evidence that these are rural businesses or that this supports the rural economy to any marked degree. Use of taxi companies that can provide 7-seater carriages or minibuses, commonly based in urban areas, does not demonstrably support the rural economy.
14. The planning application form indicates that the holiday let does not create any direct employment opportunities. A part-time caretaker, who runs a pest control business, is apparently paid for an average of 20 hours per week. However, this is not robustly evidenced by the single invoice from March 2025, which is after the appeal was made. The caretaker is in any case based in Gainsborough, which is a main town. I understand the Hall is serviced by a team of part-time cleaners consisting of local residents. However, the cleaning company is based in a large urban town over 40 miles away and little substantive evidence has been provided in relation to any local cleaners. Therefore, it has not been demonstrated that the holiday let supports the rural economy through employment.
15. A range of other businesses are involved in support of the holiday use and more generally the maintenance of the Hall. The laundry company and the heating and plumbing engineer are based in distant towns. The roofing and construction company and landscaping services are based in Lincoln. Others such as the electrician and farming contractor appear to be based more locally. Irrespective, there is little evidence that an ongoing residential use would not require the services of a similar range of tradespeople as part and parcel of the routine maintenance of Glentworth Hall and its grounds.
16. Tourism overall results in significant economic benefits for businesses and communities, including shopping and food and drink spend and employment. More locally, the West Lindsey Visitor Economy Strategy (2022) notes that the visitor economy is a significant and growing sector and there is a high demand for, yet a limited supply of, self-catering accommodation including to accommodate multigenerational and friends' group travel. Notwithstanding that the holiday let accommodates large groups, for reasons set out above, it is not justified on rural economic grounds or by proximity to existing businesses or natural features.
17. My attention has been drawn to a planning permission (ref 147074) for change of use of dwelling to create holiday let at Moortown House, a grade II listed building in the countryside around 2.8km north east of the small village of South Kelsey. That holiday let provides 5 bedrooms suitable for up to 12 people, a swimming pool and tennis court. The Council accepted it would bring visitors to the area to aid the economy of the district, including Nettleton, Caistor and Market Raisen.
18. Despite some similarities, it is not demonstrably directly comparable to the appeal scheme. It appears better located in relation to smaller rural settlements and the smaller number of visitors would be more readily accommodated in rural food and drink establishments. The owners in that case retained a generous amount of living space for their own accommodation such that the tourism use is in addition to the residential use and not replacing it. Third party representations also indicate that the Moortown House holiday let income supports a farming business, whereas the

appeal scheme is not diversification of a rural business. Moortown House does not therefore provide a justification for the appeal scheme and, in considering each case on its own merits, I find no inconsistency in the Council's decision making.

19. Therefore, I conclude that, by virtue of its location, the change of use of Glentworth Hall to holiday let accommodation is not justifiable to maintain or enhance the rural economy nor by proximity to existing established businesses or natural features. Accordingly, the appeal scheme conflicts with the aims of LP Policy S5.

Other Matters

20. Glentworth Hall comprises a coursed limestone rubble 16th century rear range and a red brick 18th century front range with hipped slate roof. Its 2 storey 11 bay front has slightly projecting end bays and central 3 bays, the latter crowned with pediment with modillion decoration. It has an ashlar plinth, first floor band and narrower upper band, with a central ashlar doorway with moulded doorcase, pediment, consoles and double 3 quarter glazed doors. At the time of listing, its interior had been vandalised and it was in a severe state of dilapidation before being restored in the late 20th century.
21. There is little before me in relation to the unauthorised works that have been carried out and that will be the subject of a separate application. However, on the basis that the change of use does not require alterations to the LB or its curtilage, I am satisfied that the appeal scheme would not harm the special interest of the LB.
22. I understand that there will be substantial costs associated with maintaining Glentworth Hall and the owner wants to put it into an effective, sympathetic use. However, little substantive evidence has been provided in relation to maintenance costs or to demonstrate that it is not economically viable, or there is no demand for it, as a residential dwelling.
23. I note reference to the Hall being previously leased as a yoga and wellbeing retreat. However, the appeal relates to the change of use of a dwelling and there is little evidence in relation to any other existing lawful use. Therefore, this is not a matter that weighs in favour of the appeal.

Conclusion

24. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal scheme conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations to outweigh the conflict.
25. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Sarah Manchester

INSPECTOR