

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2016

by Stephen Normington BSc DipTP MRICS MRTPI FIQ FIHE

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

Decision date: 24th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E2001/W/16/3153689

Land west of 43 White Gap Road, Little Weighton, East Riding of Yorkshire HU20 3XF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr D Stephenson against the decision of East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00264/OUT, dated 26 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two storey house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was made in outline with all matters apart from access reserved for future determination. A block plan showing the position of the proposed access on to White Gap Road and an indicative position of the proposed dwelling was submitted with the application. I have had regard to this plan in the determination of this appeal.
3. The Council changed the description of application Ref 16/00264/OUT to 'Erection of a dwelling (Access to be considered)'. This is a more accurate description of the proposed development which I have therefore used in the determination of this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - Whether the proposal is a sustainable form of development having regard to the location of the site in the countryside
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Important Landscape Area of the Yorkshire Wolds.

Reasons

Sustainable Development

5. The appeal site comprises a former allotment garden bounded to the east by an access road to a recently converted barn complex and to the west by
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Weighton House. It forms a gap in the frontage of this part of White Gap Road with No 43 being located immediately to the east of the access track and agricultural land lying to the north and south. Beyond Weighton House the south side of White Gap Road is characterised by sporadic development comprising of several paddocks having a variety of outbuildings

6. Although close to the settlement boundary of the village, the site is designated as being located in the open countryside. In my view, the site has a rural appearance and is located within a transitional area between the village and the wider countryside where dwellings become fewer and open gaps become larger as the road travels westwards from the settlement boundary.
7. The Council's approach to development within the countryside is set out in Policy S4 (Section C) of the East Riding Local Plan Strategy Document 2016 (Local Plan). This policy, amongst other things, indicates that proposals for permanent dwellings for agricultural, forestry or other rural based occupational dwellings will be supported. Additionally, affordable housing, replacement dwellings and new dwellings of exceptional quality or of truly outstanding innovative design may also be supported. I have no evidence to indicate that the proposed development would meet any of the above stated exceptions and as such it would be contrary to the policy.
8. Paragraph 7 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental. Whilst it may be possible to deliver positive gains to one of these, this should not be to the detriment of another. In order to achieve sustainable development, the Framework advises that the planning system should ensure that economic, social and environmental gains are sought jointly and simultaneously. Policy S4 of the Local Plan reflects the paragraph 7 of the Framework by seeking to direct housing growth in sustainable settlements and prevent uncontrolled growth into the surrounding countryside.
9. The proposed development would generate short term employment opportunities during the construction phase and the occupation of the dwelling would provide a limited contribution to help support local services. These economic and social benefits would gain some support from the Framework. However, these benefits must be balanced against any adverse impacts.
10. Outside of the development limits Policy S4 places strict controls on new development to prevent the expansion of the built form of the settlement into the countryside and pressure for services which cannot be supported. Although Little Weighton has some limited facilities, the need to travel outside the village to access some key services and employment cannot be overlooked. The environmental dimension of sustainability includes the need to move to a low carbon economy. Notwithstanding the proximity of site to the village, I consider that future residents would be reliant on car use and would therefore not meet that requirement.
11. Taking these factors into account, I consider that the proposed development within the countryside and being contrary to the locational strategy of the up to date development plan would not accord with the environmental dimension of sustainability. Consequently, the continued expansion of Little Weighton into the countryside would undermine the spatial integrity of the development plan

and the ability of the Council to deliver a truly plan-led approach. These factors outweigh the limited social and economic benefits.

12. I have taken into account the appellants contention that the proposed development would be no more unsustainable than the existing neighbouring properties. Whilst this may be the case, unsustainable development should not be perpetuated in areas with few facilities.
13. Given the above and having had regard to the policies of the Framework as a whole, I conclude that the proposed development would not amount to a sustainable form of development and would thus be contrary to Policy S4 of the Local Plan and paragraph 14 of the Framework.

Character and appearance

14. The appeal site is located within an area that is semi-rural in appearance where there are few dwellings and large open gaps between. I agree with the Council that the appeal site is within an area where dwellings dissipate into the countryside and the open gaps become larger. I consider that the open gaps, including the appeal site, are an integral part of the character of this part of White Gap Road on its approach to the more urbanised part of the village within the defined development limits.
15. The proposed construction of a two storey dwelling would eliminate the gap between the two adjacent dwellings and create a more urbanised linear form of development along this part of the road. Consequently, the current semi-rural appearance of this part of the road would be lost and a more suburban character would prevail.
16. I note the appellant's view that a dwelling could be acceptably designed to respect the local architectural vernacular and that the building would be seen as a physical part of the village. However, the fact remains that the site is outside the defined development limit. The character of the area is that of diminishing buildings with increasing open gaps that comprise the transitional semi-rural approach to the village rather than being a physical part of it.
17. I consider that the proposed development resulting in the loss of the important gap would not respect the intrinsic character of the area in the approach to the village. As such, the proposed development would have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area and would be contrary to Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the Local Plan. These policies, amongst other things, require development to be of a high quality design that should demonstrate an understanding of the intrinsic qualities of the landscape setting and that within the Yorkshire Wolds special attention should be given to ensuring developments will not adversely affect the special character and appearance of the area.

Other matters

18. The appellant has drawn my attention to the fact that the Council has granted planning permission for similar proposals outside of development limits. However, I do not have any details of the nature of these proposals or the circumstances relating to the decision of the Council to grant planning permission. Consequently, I cannot be sure that these are representative of the circumstance in this appeal and, in any case, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.

19. I have taken into account the suggestion of the appellant that a footpath along the front of the appeal site and No 43 could be provided to link with the existing pedestrian footpath on the south side of White Gap Road. I have no details or evidence that such footpath is capable of being provided. Whilst the provision of such footpath may improve accessibility to the village, this would not outweigh the conflict that I have found with Policy S4 nor outweigh the harm that I have found to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

20. For the above reasons, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Stephen Normington

INSPECTOR