

Appeal Decision

Hearing held on 1 February 2017

Site visit made on 1 February 2017

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E2001/W/16/3158917

Field Head, Driffield Road, Leconfield, East Riding of Yorkshire HU17 7LU

- 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 Wayne Low of Richmond Properties against the decision of East Riding of Yorkshire Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/01029/PLF/EASTNE, dated 21 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of dwelling for equine worker.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are whether there is an essential need for a dwelling to accommodate an equine worker and the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Essential need

3. Field Head currently accommodates a dwelling, a row of stables, some ancillary store rooms and some paddocks. Twelve horses are based on site and the appellant's daughters, Geneva and Amelia Low, compete on these horses in dressage, eventing, show jumping and hunts. From the evidence presented to me, and the discussions at the Hearing, it is clear that they do so to a high level having represented England in 2015. At that time a full time groom was employed to provide care and training for the horses in addition to that provided by Amelia and Geneva. This groom lived in nearby Leconfield, but left the appellant's employ in 2015 for personal reasons.
 4. Amelia and Geneva did not compete at such a high level in 2016, or currently, and it was suggested to me that the reason for this was because the two part time grooms they employ are unable to provide the same level of care and training than could be given by a full time groom living on site. Furthermore it was suggested that a full time groom living on site would allow Amelia and Geneva to develop their riding careers further than before.
-

5. At the Hearing, Amelia and Geneva advised that they work around 15 hours a day caring for and training their horses, and regularly start at 0500 hours. Though they are assisted by the part time grooms, they are unable to provide the full amount of training necessary to enable them to compete at the standard they previously achieved. Furthermore, Amelia and Geneva compete at events generally on a weekly basis which sometimes requires the help of a groom and often involves staying away overnight. At these times a groom is also required to continue the training and care for those horses remaining at the stables.
6. I was informed that, to assist Amelia and Geneva in reaching at least the levels of achievement previously attained or to advance their careers even further, the appellant is endeavouring to employ a groom with a level 3 qualification in horse care and 4 years post qualification experience. I was advised that a groom with this level of qualification would expect to be provided with accommodation on site. Moreover a groom of the calibre required would most likely be of an age that they would have a family and so would expect to be provided with a family sized home. This also allows for the possibility for the groom's partner to provide additional care or training for the horses. Therefore, it was suggested that without this accommodation being provided on site, the appellant would be unable to attract a suitably qualified groom and effectively Amelia and Geneva's careers would stall at the current level and not reach the level achieved in 2015 or advance any further.
7. I also understand there is an intention to develop a breeding programme at the site which would allow horses to develop a long standing bond with their riders. I was advised this would be an advantage in competition and is common at the high levels of competition Amelia and Geneva would like to participate in.
8. These arguments are persuasive that, for their aspirations, at least one full time groom is required to assist on site, and that ordinarily such a person would expect to be accommodated on site. I accept that considerations of the viability or profitability of a business is not applicable in this case.
9. However whilst reaching a high level of competition is clearly important to Amelia and Geneva, they do not derive a living from the equine use and the failure to provide on-site accommodation would not entirely prevent them from competing, albeit they would do so at a lower level. This would, no doubt, be frustrating for them, but I do not consider that this amounts to an essential need for which a new dwelling in the countryside could be justified.
10. Furthermore, the site is not very distant from Leconfield or Beverley, and, as demonstrated by their previous full time groom in 2015, it is not wholly impractical for some support to be provided by a groom living in either settlement. Indeed I am not persuaded that, in an emergency situation where a groom was urgently needed, a groom living in either settlement could not be on site quickly enough to provide the required assistance.
11. It was agreed by the parties that security issues can be a consideration, but cannot alone justify a dwelling. I heard that there have been break-ins at the site, the last being around two years ago. In response to that, CCTV to cover the stables was then installed and since that time there have been no break-ins which suggests that security at the site is currently sufficient and the CCTV has acted as a suitable deterrent.

12. I understand some horses are left in the paddocks overnight. Whilst, from my site visit, I noted that not all paddocks are overlooked by the existing house, the majority of the property is. Therefore I give little weight to any security benefits of a new dwelling in the position proposed.
13. In summary, I do not consider there is an essential need for a dwelling to accommodate an equine worker. Accordingly the development would be contrary to Policy S4 of the East Riding Local Plan Strategy Document (ERLPSD) and paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework which both aim to restrict new dwellings in the countryside.
14. I note that the adjacent veterinary centre has two flats within the building for its employees. However, that has little bearing on the need for a dwelling at the appeal site as the operations and needs are different.

Character and appearance

15. The proposed dwelling would be sited at the entrance to the driveway which serves the existing property. The existing house is seen as part of a small cluster of development which includes the stables and store rooms at the site, and the adjacent veterinary centre which appears prominently in the Driffield Road street scene. Aside from this cluster, there are no other buildings along Driffield Road between the Normandy barracks on the edge of Leconfield to the north, and the ambulance station on the edge of Beverley to the south.
16. The proposed dwelling would be detached from this cluster, being separated from it by a paddock. Due to its separation from this cluster, and all other buildings, the proposal would primarily be seen in the context of the surrounding paddocks and fields which provide an open and rural setting.
17. I accept the paddocks, neat hedges and low level fences at the site do lend a more formal context to the site than the agricultural land to the north and opposite. Nonetheless the dwelling would appear isolated from all other buildings and incongruous in its open and rural context.
18. Due to this incongruity with its setting, the proposed dwelling would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore fail to accord with Policy ENV1 of the ERLPSD which aims to ensure development respects the character and appearance of the area and ENV2 of the ERLPSD which requires development to be sensitively integrated into the existing landscape.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR

APPEARANCES

FOR THE APPELLANT

David Barker MRTPI MRICS	Evolution Town Planning LLP
Wayne Low	Appellant
Geneva Low	Appellant's daughter
Amelia Low	Appellant's daughter

FOR THE LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITY

Sarah Lamming	Planning Officer
Neil Archbutt MRICS	Council's Valuer

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED AT THE HEARING

List of horse riding achievements by Amelia and Geneva Low