

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by A Jordan BA Hons MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 April 2017

APPEAL A

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/16/3161966

Land off Honeypot Lane, Colsterworth, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG33 5LZ

- 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 David Wilson Trailers Ltd against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S16/1048, dated 11 April 2016 was refused by notice dated 10 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is outline approval for one new commercial unit and parking area.
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APPEAL B

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/16/3164232

Land off Honeypot Lane, Colsterworth, Grantham, Lincolnshire, NG33 5LZ

- 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 David Wilson Trailers Ltd against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S16/1156, dated 11 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is change of use from redundant airfield to hardstanding for trailer parking.
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Decision

1. The appeals are dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue for both appeals is whether the site is in a sustainable location for employment use.

Reasons

3. The site comprise a large area of flat land close to the A1. Land immediately adjacent and to the front of the site is used by David Wilsons Trailers, a company which produce trailers for shows and exhibitions. The office part of the business is housed within portacabins with a large covered workshop and open parking for a number of display vehicles. The site is accessed via Honeypot Lane, which is predominantly in employment use. To the rear sits an area of managed woodland. The site and its neighbours sit in open countryside.
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4. The site was formerly in use as part of the WWII RAF Witham Airfield. I am told it has never otherwise been in use and is considered by the Council to comprise a greenfield site. It comprises an open and overgrown area roughly the same size as the existing business, with a further narrower projection of land to the rear which extends beyond the established line of buildings and structures to the rear of Honeypt Lane. It is within this area that the submitted plans for appeal ref APP/E2530/W/16/3161966 show an indicative footprint for a commercial unit.
5. The area is not an allocated employment site in the Adopted Development Plan. Together Policy E1 and SP1 of the *South Kesteven Core Strategy* (CS) SAP4 and SAP5 of the *South Kesteven Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document* (DPD) seek to direct employment development to existing settlements. Outside the main settlements and Local Service Centres, small business schemes will be supported where it can be demonstrated that the business will help support or regenerate the rural economy. The development plan policies seek to direct employment development to accessible locations, which help to reduce the need to travel. They also seek to where possible utilise previously developed land, and be well related to other existing employment uses. In this regard new employment development in the countryside which is not related to type of businesses generally considered appropriate in rural locations is to be resisted.
6. Policy SAP5 of the DPD allows for the expansion of established businesses on unallocated sites where it enables employment to continue on such sites. Information submitted with the appeal indicates that the proposal would facilitate the continued operation and expansion of an existing enterprise. This comprises the diversification of the business to include mobile accommodation units and commercial welfare units which would require additional space to store the vehicles, along with additional office and workshop accommodation.
7. Whilst I note the appellant's future plans for the business, the submissions lack sufficient detail for me to be assured that the proposals are necessary to ensure the continued operation of the business. However, I have been provided with no information of how the benefit of this expansion would be quantified. The information before me does not include any firm details of the existing employees on site or details of how these jobs could be consolidated or increased. I have no likely timescale for the development and note that previous proposals at the site date from some time ago. It is also not clear to me from the submitted plans that the proposed new building would necessarily be related to the existing business, as its position and access arrangements could enable independent use. Therefore, whilst I have some sympathy for the appellant's aspirations for the site, in its current form I can give little weight to the benefits the submission may bring to the existing business.
8. The site is outside any Local Service Centre, and so would not accord with policy SAP3 of the DPD. Furthermore, as it would not comprise a rural enterprise of the type listed in policy SAP4 of the DPD it cannot be regarded to comply with the requirements of SAP4 or policies SP1 or E1 of the CS. As the proposal before me provides no firm details of how the proposal would enable the retention of an existing business the proposal would also fail to comply with Policy SAP5 of the DPD. The proposal would therefore conflict with the objectives of the above policies in the adopted development plan. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in

accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

9. I take into account the location of the site, which is close to the A1 within an established cluster of agri-businesses. I have considered the appellant's views, that the site comprises previously developed land due to its historic use as an airfield. The airfield use appears to have been long ceased and so on the basis of the information before me I accept the Council's view that the previous use of the land is extinguished and that the land in question is greenfield, although I do not consider this to be a matter on which the appeal turns. The position of the site within a strip of existing development could in theory allow for some expansion to the rear of the site with very limited impact on the character of the countryside in this location.
10. However, in the form proposed the proposal includes a narrow projection of land beyond the established building line on which permission is sought by appeal A for a new employment unit, and by appeal B for trailer parking. Either use would extend the visual spread of employment use which would have an erosive and harmful effect on the character of the countryside in this location. I note that permission has been granted for a wind turbine to the rear of the site. Nevertheless the further urbanising effect of the proposals would weigh against the proposal before me in the planning balance.
11. I am advised that permission has previously been granted for the proposals before me, but that this has since lapsed, and that in the intervening period the current development plan has come into force. As this previous permission is no longer capable of implementation, I consider that it no longer carries any weight in the planning balance.

Conclusion

12. I therefore conclude that the proposals would conflict with adopted development plan policies SP1 and E1 of the CS and SAP3, SAP4 and SAP5 of the DPD aimed at restricting employment development in the countryside. Based on the information before me no material considerations would outweigh the harm identified in this case. Therefore, having regard to all other matters raised, the appeals are dismissed.

Anne Jordan

INSPECTOR