
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2017

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 28th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2430/W/17/3169413

4 Old Brickyard Cottages, Eastwell Road, Scalford, Melton Mowbray, Leics LE14 4ST

- 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 Major Patricia Johnston against the decision of Melton Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00490/FUL, dated 6 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 30 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of garage. New two bedroom dwelling and parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would provide a suitable location for housing having regard to the accessibility of services and facilities

Reasons

3. The appeal site is situated between a terrace of four properties and a small garden centre. It contains a garage and an area of hardstanding and garden associated with 4 Old Brickyard Cottages. As such, the site has domestic character and appearance as part of a residential property, in contrast to the agricultural fields which surround the terrace and garden centre. I also note small clusters of development further north along Landyke Lane. Nevertheless, the location is considered by the Council to be within the countryside. Due to its location beyond the nearest village of Scalford, and the limited clusters of development, I concur with the Council that the appeal site is within the countryside.
 4. The proposed development would be of a scale, design and siting that would complement the existing terrace and not encroach into agricultural fields. Given the proximity of the terrace, it would not be physically isolated. It would accord with Policy BE1 of the Melton Local Plan 1999 which seeks good design.
 5. The road from the appeal site to Scalford is narrow and runs at the national speed limit for much of the way with no pavements or lighting. At the time of my site visit, the road was relatively quiet, but vehicles travel at considerable speed. There is no obvious footpath link to Scalford and the grass verges along the side of the road are not easy to walk along. Cycling to Scalford
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would be possible, but not greatly attractive due to the road conditions. The appellant highlights a hail and ride bus service that can stop outside the appeal site, but I have not been presented with details on its frequency or destinations.

6. Scalford contains a number of day-to-day services and facilities, including a shop, post office and primary school, and is not that far from the appeal site. However, due to the road conditions and little evidence of frequent public transport, it is likely that the private car would be used on a regular basis to access these services and facilities. I accept that Scalford probably has the same bus service, but occupants of the village are able to access village services by foot or bike with the pavements and 30mph speed limit that exist in this settlement.
7. The adjacent garden centre, while providing employment opportunities and a tea room, would not significantly reduce the need to travel. Similarly, while the dwelling may be able to provide a home office as indicated by the appellant, there would still be a need to travel to access services and facilities. As such, the dwelling would be functionally isolated. While a single dwelling house is unlikely to generate a large number of vehicular movements, such development would encourage a largely car-dependent mode of travel. This would have negative effects in terms of the use of natural resources and the inaccessibility of local services, which are important considerations.
8. The proposed development would provide an additional two bedroom dwelling in a district where this size of dwelling is lacking, and would allow the appellant to downsize from their existing property. It is also argued that it would be energy efficient and accessible for all people. The existing garage it would replace makes little contribution to the character and appearance of the area. I also note the support expressed from a number of local residents. However, these benefits are modest due to the scale of development and do not represent special circumstances for an isolated new home in the countryside.
9. In summary, the development would not provide a suitable location for housing having regard to the accessibility of services and facilities. Thus, it would not accord with Policy OS2 of the Melton Local Plan 1999 which limits development within the countryside to specific categories, none of which have been demonstrated in this instance. It would also conflict with paragraph 17 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which seeks to promote sustainable modes of transport, as well as paragraph 55 of the NPPF which seeks to avoid new isolated homes in the countryside unless special circumstances apply.

Conclusion

10. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR