



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2017

by R A Exton Dip URP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31st July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T2405/W/17/3172155

Land at Brooklands, Narborough Road, Crosby, Leicester LE9 1TB

- 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 Andrew Moltu against the decision of Blaby District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/1726/OUT, dated 14 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 22 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as erection of detached dwellinghouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The application was made in outline form with all matters reserved. Plans have nevertheless been submitted showing the appearance of a house on the site. Whilst I shall treat these as being for illustrative purposes, a two storey house as shown on the plans has been referred to by the appellant in support of his case. I shall therefore take account of the plans accordingly.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the site represents an appropriate location for housing having regard to the settlement strategy and Green Wedge.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located outside the Primary Residential Area for the village of Crosby within an area of Green Wedge as defined on the Proposals Map of the adopted Blaby District Local Plan 1999 (the Local Plan). It currently comprises part of the garden of Brooklands. The site is of triangular shape with its widest part closest to Brooklands, tapering to a point further west along Narborough Road. Mature hedges bound to Narborough Road and the rear of the site. Within, the site is of a generally open character, with two small garden buildings that are not highly visible from outside the site. Trees and vegetation towards the eastern end of the appeal site partly screen Brooklands on the western approach to the village. In its current form the site provides a soft visual transition from the Green Wedge to the built up area of the village.
5. The proposal meets with none of the exceptions set out in Policy C3 of the Local Plan or Policy CS16 of the Blaby District Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 (the Core Strategy) that allow for development within Green Wedges. The

appellant refers to Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy requiring the need to retain Green Wedges being balanced against the need to provide new development (including housing) in the most sustainable locations. However, the following sentence of this part of the policy makes it clear that the detailed boundaries of the existing Green Wedges will be formally reviewed through the Allocations, Designations and Development Management DPD. As the justification for this policy emphasises, Green Wedges are an important, long standing policy tool in Leicestershire. I therefore consider it is important that changes to Green Wedge boundaries are considered as part of the plan making process rather than an ad hoc basis, particularly when they relate to small scale development.

6. The appellant also makes reference to the Green Wedge Review 2009, the Strategic Green Wedge Assessment 2016 and the value they place on the appeal site area as part of the Green Wedge. Whilst the earlier of these documents has informed the Core Strategy and the later may inform future development plans, they do not form part of the adopted development plan. In any event, I consider that in this location the Green Wedge fulfils the objective of Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy of preventing the coalescence of settlements.
7. The erection of a dwelling within the site, and particularly one of two storeys, would be highly visible on both the approach to, and exit from the village. Whilst the boundary hedge to Narborough Road would partly screen the lower part of the dwelling, the upper parts would be visible over it. The proposed dwelling would be sited in front of the trees and vegetation towards the eastern end of the appeal site and consequently would not benefit from any screening from them. There would also be views of the proposed dwelling through its access onto Narborough Road.
8. The overall effect of the proposal would be to undermine the visual transition from Green Wedge to built form that currently exists here and contribute to the coalescence of the two settlements. The proposed dwelling would form a prominent visual addition to the Green Wedge that would be harmful to its open and undeveloped character in this location. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to Policy C3 of the Local Plan and Policy CS16 of the Core Strategy in protecting the undeveloped character of the Green Wedge. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) insofar as it relates to protecting valued landscapes.

Other Matters

9. The appellant and Council disagree over the method of calculation and existence of a 5 year housing land supply. There is insufficient evidence before me to conclude on this matter. If the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply then the provisions of paragraph 14 of the Framework require planning permission to be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework as a whole. The proposal would deliver the social benefits of a single dwelling in what is a generally accessible location. It would also have economic benefits, albeit very limited, by boosting the supply of housing. However, even were I to conclude that there is a shortfall and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should be considered out-of-date, I consider that the harm to the open and undeveloped character of the Green

Wedge I have identified significantly and demonstrably outweighs these limited benefits.

10. The appellant refers to appeal Ref APP/T2405/A/10/2138666 in support of his case. This proposal was for a significantly greater scale of development than the appeal proposal. It was also considered under a different development plan and before the introduction of the Framework. I therefore consider that it is materially different to the appeal proposal and bears little comparison.

Conclusion

11. The harm to the open an undeveloped character of the Green Wedge and the consequent conflict with the development plan provide sufficient reasons to justify a refusal of planning permission. The proposal would therefore fail to represent sustainable development when considered against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. In light of this and taking all other matters raised into account I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard Exton

INSPECTOR