



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2019

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/W/19/3224934

Land at Barkway Service Station, London Road, Barkway, Herts SG8 8EX

- 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 Peter Blanche against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/01916/OP, dated 25 April 2018, was refused by notice dated 14 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of six houses.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues of this appeal are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

3. The outline proposal is for the development of 2 and 3 storey houses laid out in two terraced rows of three dwellings arranged as a cul-de-sac, on an undeveloped area of land adjacent to Barkway Service Station and its associated car repair and MOT centre. The site appears as a field enclosed by trees and bushes in the countryside beyond the Green Belt. Apart from the transport related uses, the site is bounded by fields, the road to Buckland and the High Street.
4. The proposed 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings would be a small addition to the local housing stock and would reflect the appearance and scale of infill housing development around the village of Barkway and that of recent new dwellings nearby at the 'Tally-Ho' Public House and in a small cluster to the south east of the site.
5. These nearby developments appear, however, as infill of an existing developed area on the other side of London Road and High Street, which has a greater visual relationship with the village than the appeal site.
6. The proposed development of houses set close to each other around a cul-de-sac would be visible from the proposed widened access from the road to

Buckland and through the boundary of trees and bushes that would be retained between the proposed houses and the roads bounding the site. This would result in a significant urbanisation of this existing rural site.

7. As the proposed development would be viewed in combination with existing development on the other side of London road and High Street, the proposal would result in the appearance of ribbon development in the countryside, rather than as the growth of an existing settlement or village. The removal of the boundary heavy verdure and development of the open field behind with a series of residential units would be harmful to the locality's rural character.
8. For these reasons the proposal would be contrary to Policy 6 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 With Alterations (LP), Policies SP5 and NE1 of the emerging North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 (ELP) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which seek to maintain existing countryside and the character of rural areas, and also ensure that new development does not cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

9. Although the appellant has set out their views on the advice and communication from the local authority through the planning application process and the development of the ELP, these are not matters that I can take into account as material to my independent consideration of the proposed development.
10. The appellant has stated that the proposed would provide a public benefit by the enhancing of the rural economy, including a link between the proposal and their aspirations for the expansion of their shop operations at Barkway Service Station. However, any economic benefit from the development of 6 houses would not be significant and there is no direct connection between the proposal and the expansion of shop services that I can take into account as material to my determination of this appeal, which I have considered on its individual merits.
11. The most recent 2018 measurements show that the delivery of housing within the North Hertfordshire District was some 55% of the Council's housing requirement over the previous three years. Although this is significantly below the recognised requirement the adverse effects arising from this residential development proposal which I have identified would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of an addition to the local housing stock

Conclusion

12. Although Policy 6 of the LP is now of some age it accords with the Framework and I have given it significant weight in my considerations. As the ELP is in the later stages leading to adoption, these policies have undergone extensive scrutiny and consultation and I have afforded them moderate weight.
13. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, 2004 indicates that an application for planning permission must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance, although I have had regard to the appellant's various

representations, I have seen nothing sufficiently persuasive to suggest that the policy objections are outweighed.

14. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR