



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2019

by Paul Cooper MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A2470/W/19/3228759

Plot at Pickworth Road, Great Casterton, Stamford, Rutland PE9 4AU

- 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 Andrew Woodhouse against the decision of Rutland Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/0160/FUL, dated 11 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 4 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is tourist bed & breakfast facility.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Rutland Council against Mr Andrew Woodhouse. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would be sited in a suitable location, having regard to its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located just outside the village of Great Casterton, on land designated as open countryside, as set out in the Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document (2014) (the DPD).
5. The appeal proposal is for the erection of a six-bedroom dwelling, which the appellant states would be operated as a bed & breakfast facility to replace an existing facility located nearby.
6. Policies CS4, CS15, CS16 and CS19 of the Rutland Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2011) (the CS) state that, amongst other matters, development in the countryside will be limited to that which has an essential need to be located in the countryside, and restricted to particular types of development to support the rural economy and meet affordable housing needs, as well as supporting the enhancement of tourist and visitor facilities, and development should meet high standards of design and contribute positively to local distinctiveness and sense of place.
7. This is further reinforced by Policies SP6, SP7 and SP15 of the DPD, which support development that is new enterprise growth, provided that it cannot reasonably be accommodated with planned limits of development, and

proposals should also address matters such as siting, scale, massing, design and the impact on the highway network.

8. The local character is of buildings of a traditional, simple form, with stone and slate being the predominant materials of construction, with some exceptions. In terms of the character of the area, I find that the design of the dwelling, and the materials proposed would not respect the character and appearance of the area. In addition, the use of red roof tiles and cedar boarding would look incongruous when seen in the context of the locality.
9. I note the comments of the appellant in relation to the proposal being a modern structure of quality, designed to a traditional manner, with the best of local materials. Whilst there is scope for innovation and contemporary design in many locations, there is also a need to respect the locality. The design, massing and scale of the proposal would create a substantial property of modern design that would appear as a very dominant and imposing feature that would fail to respect the openness and rural character of this countryside location.
10. I also note the comments of the appellant in relation to the innovative development set out in Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, exceptional design quality envisaged by Paragraph 79 is a very high bar to meet. There is no evidence before me to indicate that the design of the dwelling is truly outstanding or innovative, that it reflects the highest standards in architecture, or that it would help raise the standards of design more generally in rural areas. Moreover, for the reasons I have set above, as the proposal would fail to reflect the character of the countryside location, it would not significantly enhance its immediate setting, or be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.
11. It is stated that the dwelling would be operated as a bed and breakfast facility, in order to replace an existing facility. I have no evidence to justify this claim, such as identification of the facility it is to replace, a need for such a facility, or any evidence to prove that such an enterprise is viable. My obvious concern is that if the business were to fail, then what would be left would be a residential dwelling in the countryside. Without any supporting evidence, I can only attach limited weight to the proposal.
12. Therefore, I find that the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area and as such would not be located within a suitable location as set out in the development plan. As a result, it is contrary to Policies CS4, CS15, CS16 and CS19 of the CS, Policies SP6, SP7 and SP15 of the DPD, and the design objectives of the Framework.

Other Matters

13. I have taken into consideration the comments of the appellant in relation to the potential for the positive impact on tourism and the rural economy. Based on the evidence before me, as stated above, I consider that it has not been shown that there is a sufficient functional link between the most recent bed and breakfast use in the locality and the need to provide facilities to improve the offer in the local area. No detailed information has been submitted with the appeal to show the viability of the existing business and how this new enterprise would operate and be sufficiently viable and as such can only give limited weight to this consideration.

14. I have also noted the appellant's comments in relation to other consented schemes in the area. However, save for the appellant's brief commentary, I have few details of the cases and so I cannot know if they would be comparable to the scheme before me. I have therefore determined the current appeal purely on its own merits, in the light of the circumstances that apply in this case.
15. Taken as a whole, I conclude that the matters raised in support of the development do not outweigh the harm that I have identified in respect of the site's unsuitable location as a result of its harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Cooper

INSPECTOR