



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 September 2019

by C Coyne BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D0515/W/19/3230686

Land north east of No 8 Gote Lane, Gorefield, Cambridgeshire PE13 4NJ

- 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 and Mrs B Pooley against the decision of Fenland District Council.
 - The application Ref F/YR18/0985/F, dated 24 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is 2 no 3 bed chalet bungalows with integral garages and means of access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised by this appeal are:
 - Whether the appeal site is located within the settlement of Gorefield and if so, whether the proposed development would constitute limited residential infill; and
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether within the settlement

3. The appeal site is located on the northern edge of the settlement of Gorefield which is identified as a 'Small Village' by Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan 2014 (FLP). Within these small villages, Policy LP3 restricts development to limited residential infilling or a small business opportunity. There is one dwelling directly opposite the appeal site as well as a number of dwellings to the south-east of the appeal site.
4. No settlement boundary for Gorefield has been defined in the FLP. This combined with, a) the presence of an existing building to the north-eastern boundary; and b) the existing built form of the residential properties running north-eastwards along Gote Lane lead me to conclude that the appeal site is not within the open countryside. In addition, given the location of the appeal site and its proximity to the built-up area of Gorefield village, I do not consider it to be in an isolated location.

Whether limited residential infill

5. I note the point made by the appellants in support of the proposed development in relation to it being classed as infill residential development. Infilling is normally associated with the completion of an otherwise substantial built up frontage of several dwellings or at the very least, consolidation of a largely built up area. It is not a question of how small or large a gap measures per se. I consider that the appeal site does not have the characteristics normally associated with infill development.
6. Therefore, in this case, given the fact that the building directly adjacent to the north east boundary of the appeal site is a water pumping station, I do not consider that the proposed development would constitute infill residential development. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would conflict with Policy LP3 of the FLP (adopted May 2014) which amongst other aims seeks to protect the character of smaller villages.

Character and Appearance

7. Gorefield is a small village comprising predominately residential development set within a wider rural landscape. Travelling in a north-east direction, Gote Lane is primarily characterised by large detached dwellings with front and rear gardens until it reaches the southern boundary of the appeal site after which it comprises a more open agricultural landscape, particularly on the eastern side of the road.
8. To the rear of the residential dwellings on the eastern side of Gote Lane there is an agricultural field which stretches northwards until it reaches the boundary of another field which runs directly eastwards from the southern boundary of the appeal site for a considerable distance. This gives the area to the east and northeast of these properties a very open feel particularly in relation to views of the surrounding landscape regardless of whether the land itself is classified as being within the open countryside.
9. Consequently, I consider that the proposed development by virtue of its scale, massing and location would be visually intrusive and harm the character and appearance of the local area and landscape. This would conflict with Policy LP16 of the FLP which requires that development proposals make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness and character of an area including its landscape. It would also conflict with paragraph 127 (b) of the National Planning Policy Framework which aims to ensure that development proposals are sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Coyne

INSPECTOR