



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 October 2019

by Mr M Brooker DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X1355/W/19/3232953

Ebchester Hill, Medomsley, Durham

Easting: 411103 Northing: 554032

- 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 Ged Joyce against the decision of Durham County Council.
 - The application Ref DM/19/00970/FPA, dated 25 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as the “erection of two stables with tack rooms with forecourt, dolomite gravel parking area, creation of new vehicular access and closure and reinstatement of existing access and change of use of land to equestrian purpose”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Saved Policy GDP1 of the Derwentside District Local Plan (1997) (the LP) requires a high standard of design in keeping with the character and appearance of the area by way of the form, mass, layout, density, and material being appropriate to the site's location and taking into account the site's natural and built features. Saved Policy EN1 of the LP permits development in the countryside only where it benefits the rural economy or helps to maintain or enhance landscape character. Saved Policy EN2 of the LP prevents the encroachment of development into the surrounding countryside.
4. The proposed stables would be located in a corner of the, gently undulating, appeal site adjacent to the B6309 in the open countryside. The proposed stables would be located in a compact arrangement with hardstanding, in an open and prominent position that could be viewed from a number of locations including the adjacent road and from residential properties on Ebchester Hill and Broomhill Terrace.
5. The appellant's statement details that the stables would be constructed from timber cladding and green corrugated roofing. I noted at my site visit that such materials are typical of similar buildings in the surrounding area and that the typically equestrian design of the building would help the proposed

- development to be assimilated into the landscape. I note however, that the proposed plans include a significant area of hardstanding, this is not a feature that I noted elsewhere.
6. Furthermore, screening planting is proposed to the road and adjacent field boundary and I note that the appellant has suggested further landscape screening could be the subject of a condition placed on any resulting planning permission. While screen planting may reduce some views of the stables and hardstanding particularly from the adjacent road, I noted at my site visit that such planting was not a feature of the immediate area around the appeal site and as such would increase the prominence of the stables and associated development.
 7. The Council's statement has referred to the commercial use of the stables and that "the overall developed area of the proposal would measure approximately 638 square metres (excluding the access) with 105 square metres occupied by the stables". I note that the stables and area of hardstanding has been reduced from that sought in an earlier application, nonetheless, this is a notable development in an otherwise open field within the countryside, situated in an open and prominent location. Therefore, I find that the proposed development would not maintain or enhance the landscape character.
 8. The appellant has referred to some benefits to the rural economy resulting from the proposed development, specifically the capital outlay of the development works and ongoing spending on "equestrian products and services". However, I have not been provided with any substantive details as to the likely level of investment and ongoing spending or how this might create jobs locally and support existing services and facilities within the rural economy.
 9. Therefore, I find that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to saved policies GDP1, EN1 and EN2 of the LP.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has referred to stables in adjacent fields recently being granted planning permission. I do not have full details of the circumstances that led to these proposals being accepted and so cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. In any case I have determined the appeal on its own merits.

Conclusions

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

Mark Brooker

INSPECTOR