



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 November 2019 by Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA

Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/19/3235972

Robins Nest, Main Street, Fenton, Sleaford, Lincolnshire NG23 5DE

- 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 John Daubney against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S19/0752, dated 12 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a new dwelling on land adjacent to Robins Nest.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The application was made in outline with all matters reserved for subsequent approval. The application was accompanied by a site plan indicating the location of the dwelling on site, floor plans and elevations. I have dealt with the appeal on the basis that the plans are for indicative purposes only and whilst they have informed my decision they have not, in themselves, been determinative.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the proposal would provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the accessibility of services and facilities.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. Robins Nest is a semi-detached dwelling, located on the western side of Main Street, within a small rural settlement. The proposal seeks the construction of a detached dwelling in the side garden of the host property.
 6. Policies SP1 and H1 of the Core Strategy and Policy SAP H1 of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document state that new development should be provided in specific settlements which have been
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identified as suitable for housing. In all other villages and in the countryside proposals would be considered acceptable if they are sites for: affordable housing, agriculture, forestry or equine development, rural diversification projects, local services & facilities, replacement buildings or conversions of buildings. The appeal site is not within one of the settlements identified as suitable for new housing and the proposal does not fall within the aforementioned list of exceptions.

7. There are no footpaths or street lighting leading into the settlement on either side of the appeal site. Facilities within the village are minimal, and thus insufficient to meet the day to day needs of its residents. In addition, the nearest settlements that would offer a wide range of services and facilities are not within a reasonable walking distance of the appeal site. Giving the unlit rural roads, cycling would also not be an attractive option. From the information before me it appears that public transport is limited to the Call Connect bus. As this needs to be booked in advance, its route and frequency will vary and be limited.
8. Given that other villages or towns are not within reasonable walking distance from the appeal site, are not accessible along an attractive cycling route and the limited public transport, future occupiers of the development would be likely to be dependant upon the private car to access most day to day services and facilities. I acknowledge that in rural settlements such as this car dependency will be high. I also note that the number of journeys generated by a single dwelling would be relatively small and the extent of vehicular trips from the appeal site to reach services and facilities in Newark would be relatively short. However, this does not negate the need to direct new housing towards the more sustainable settlements.
9. I note that the appellant considers the proposed dwelling to be in the affordable range for the area. However, whilst I acknowledge that the proposal is for a small dwelling, no evidence to demonstrate that the proposal is for affordable housing has been provided, and moreover, there is no mechanism before me to ensure that the development would be secured and retained as affordable housing in perpetuity. I acknowledge that the appellant would be willing to alter the size of the proposed dwelling. However, there is no evidence before me as to whether the proposal, even if amended, would meet an identified local need.
10. My attention has also been drawn to the fact that the appeal site is an infill plot in an already built area and that no other plots that would be considered suitable for housing could be found. No such evidence has been submitted but, in any event, I note the Council's claim that a 5 year housing land supply can be demonstrated, a matter which is not disputed by the appellant.
11. For the above reasons I conclude that the proposal would not provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to access to services and facilities. The development would therefore conflict with the objectives of Policies SP1 and H1 of the Core Strategy and Policy SAP H1 of the Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document, which seek to guide development to the most suitable settlements.

Other matters

12. I acknowledge the appellant's concerns regarding the service provided by the Council. However, this is a matter between the appellant and the Council. I have limited my consideration to the planning matters before me.
13. Regarding the appellant's comment about representations from third parties, irrespective of whether an objection has been raised, I have to consider the proposal on its merits. I note in this case that third parties have in fact objected to the scheme.

Recommendation

14. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andreea Spataru

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR