



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 February 2020

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/19/3237488

Adjoining Highley Golf Centre, New England Lane, Highley, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV16 6ET

- 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 Christopher Bithell against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 18/04645/FUL, dated 30 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 9 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of log cabin holiday let and parking space.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of open land on the southern side of New England Lane. It is outside of the development boundary to Highley, which is a short distance to the east, and is therefore in the countryside for planning purposes.
4. Policy CS16 of the Shropshire Core Strategy encourages the development of high quality visitor accommodation in accessible locations. However, it also states that in rural areas, proposals must be of an appropriate scale and character to their surroundings. In addition, Policy MD11 of the Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development ('SAMDev') Plan recognises that static caravans, chalets, and log cabins have a greater impact on the countryside than camping and touring caravan sites. It further states that holiday let development in the countryside that does not conform to the legal definition of a caravan, or is not for the conversion of existing buildings, will be resisted. In this regard, it is unclear from the information before me whether the development would meet the legal definition of a caravan. Other policies in both the Council's Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan seek to prevent new development that has a significant adverse effect on landscape character and visual amenity.
5. The development would be in a relatively exposed position, on rising land, that would be visible in longer views to the west. It would also be prominent in views from along New England Lane. From these vantage points the site

currently forms part of an attractive rural landscape that is characterised by rolling hills, open fields, groups of trees, and mature boundary hedges. The development would introduce a relatively large structure and parking area into this landscape, that would be surrounded by open land. In this context, it would appear as a relatively prominent intrusion into open countryside that would be visually out of keeping with its surroundings. In addition, the light and activity associated with the proposal, in close proximity to New England Lane, would be at odds with its tranquil rural character. Whilst the development would be constructed in natural materials, and would involve some additional planting, that would not adequately mitigate its impact in my view.

6. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies CS5, CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011), and Policies MD2, MD11, and MD12 of the Shropshire SAMDev Plan (2015).

Other Matter

7. It is asserted that the proposal would be attractive to users of Highley Golf Course. However, it is unclear whether there is any formal connection between the appeal proposal and the golf course, and no case has been made that it would help to diversify the operations of this existing business.

Conclusion

8. As set out above, I conclude that the development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Whilst it would be in a relatively accessible location close to Highley and would provide some modest support to the local economy, that does not alter my view that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR