
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2020

by Philip Major BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 20 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2003/W/19/3242595

Acorn Wood Caravan and Camping Site, Darby Road, Burton-upon-Stather, Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire DN15 9EB

- 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 & Mrs M Thompson against the decision of North Lincolnshire Council.
 - The application Ref: PA/2019/716, dated 11 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is the provision of a static caravan as temporary accommodation for a site manager (3 years).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue in the appeal is whether there is justification for the establishment of a unit of residential accommodation in the open countryside.

Reasons

3. Burton-upon-Stather lies a short distance to the west of the appeal site. However, it is not disputed that the appeal site lies outside the settlement in an area of open countryside, notwithstanding that it forms part of an established recreational/tourist facility (caravan park, fixed accommodation and fishing lake amongst other provision).
4. The majority of the associated leisure facilities lie to the south of the appeal site and are relatively well hidden by vegetation from public viewpoints. By contrast the proposed caravan would be located on an open area which is highly visible when seen from the west. The roadside vegetation and small administrative building on site would offer partial screening from the east, but nevertheless the caravan would be a prominent and incongruous feature. Its harsh utilitarian lines would contrast with the brick and tile administrative building and the backdrop of vegetation. I do not agree with the design and access statement assessment of the caravan being well located in the site. Indeed I agree with the Council's assessment that it would be out of character with the rural area, and visually intrusive.
5. The development plan includes the Core Strategy of 2001 (CS) and saved policies of the North Lincolnshire Local Plan (LP) of 2003. CS Policy CS3 deals

with development limits and explains that outside these limits (as here) development will be limited to that which is essential to the functioning of the countryside, including that which will contribute to the sustainable development of the tourist industry. This approach is mirrored in Policy CS2. Policy CS8 is similar in being restrictive of residential development in open countryside, and seeks to ensure that development does not have an adverse impact on the environment or landscape. Saved LP Policy RD2 follows similar principles and it is clear that the overarching objective of all these policies is to ensure that development in open countryside is limited to that which is essential in that location, and that the impact on the countryside is minimised. In this respect the policies follow the thrust of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

6. I am sympathetic to the desire of the Appellants to be able to manage the leisure site effectively and have noted the representations made in respect of problems which can occur during periods when there is no on-site supervision. However, I am mindful that the Appellants live relatively close to the appeal site and although I agree that unnecessary travel is to be discouraged, it seems to me that as the site can be reached in about 10 minutes, being called out on occasion is not an especially onerous situation. I stress here that I do not have any substantive information relating to the frequency or duration of previous out of hours call outs which might assist in this regard.
7. The administration building at the entrance to the site no doubt serves its purpose well during what might be deemed to be normal operating hours, when visitors might be expected to arrive and leave. Outside these times, as pointed out by the Council, contact may be made by telephone or electronic means to enable out of hours assistance. In addition I see no reason why visitors should not be able to make contact with a staff member in the event of an emergency, by similar means.
8. Taking all of these matters together I am not satisfied that it has been demonstrated that there is a justified functional need for a staff presence on site at all times. Furthermore I note that the application documents refer to the accommodation need being for a period of 3 years, following which the site would revert to its former condition. But there is nothing in the representations before me which explain why a 3 year period is sought.
9. To sum up on this appeal I find that there is no justified functional need for temporary residential accommodation of the type proposed on the appeal site. The caravan would be obtrusive and visually harmful. It would be in conflict with the provisions of the development plan as set out in CS and LP policies noted above, and contrary to the objectives of the NPPF.
10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Major

INSPECTOR