
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 October 2020

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Monday, 26 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/20/3252892
Welgelegen, The Street, Haultwick SG11 1JQ

- 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 Ms S. Albiston against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: 3/20/0172/FUL, dated 22 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached one-bedroom bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the site represents a suitable location for a residential development.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of an area to the front of the existing dwelling of Welgelegen. Adjoining properties contain some residential dwellings. To the rear of the site is open countryside.
4. The proposed development would result in a greater number of people residing within the locality. In consequence, and owing to the nature of the settlement, future residents would be compelled to travel to other settlements in order to access all of the services and facilities that they are likely to require on a day to day basis.
5. Although the appeal site is near to other dwellings and therefore would not be isolated in a physical sense, the lack of access to services and facilities poses a concern as the settlement is relatively small and does not appear to be well served by public transport. In consequence residents would be required to travel on the surrounding road network, which is narrow, sinuous and unlit.
6. In addition, the surrounding road network does not include separate infrastructure for pedestrians. In consequence, the lack of a welcoming pedestrian environment is likely to encourage journeys by private car.
7. Residents could use one of the number of footpaths within the surrounding area. However, as would be reasonably expected, these generally have an unmetalled surface and are also unlit. In result, they are unlikely to be an

- attractive environment for pedestrians during the hours of darkness, or during periods of inclement weather.
8. It appears that there is a greater array of services in the settlement of Dane End. However, owing to the distances between this settlement and the appeal site, combined with the nature of the surrounding roads and footpaths, these are unlikely to be accessed by methods of transport such as walking or cycling on a regular basis, particularly as the prevailing weather conditions might not always encourage travelling by such a means of transport.
 9. For similar reasons, I do not believe that the availability of public transport routes in Dane End would be readily accessible for all future occupiers of the development and therefore does not serve to overcome the lack of an appropriate pedestrian environment.
 10. Whilst the proposed development is situated within a settlement, would be in between buildings and would provide an additional dwelling in a rural settlement, this is outweighed by the lack of appropriate access to services and facilities for all future residents of the proposed dwelling.
 11. The proposed development would increase the level of housing in the vicinity of the appeal site. In addition, it is likely that future residents of the development would be able to offer additional support to local businesses. However, given that the proposed development is for a single dwelling only, the increase to the local housing supply would be limited. Furthermore, any support of local businesses and services would also be limited by reason of the likely small number of people that could be accommodated within the proposed development. Accordingly, any such benefits do not outweigh my previous concerns.
 12. The proposed development would replace an existing outbuilding. However, the weight that I can attribute to this is limited as the building does not appear to have been used for residential purposes and is some distance away from the siting of the proposed development. Accordingly, this existing building has differing effects to the scheme currently before me.
 13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would represent an unsuitable location for a residential dwelling. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Policies DPS2, GBR2, TRA1 and VILL3 of the East Herts District Plan (2018). These, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that there is a delivery of sustainable developments in accordance with a hierarchy of sites; that limited infilling in sustainable locations is encouraged; that limited infilling takes place in accordance with the provisions of adopted Neighbourhood Plans; and developments enable journeys to be made to key services and facilities to aid carbon emission reduction.

Other Matters

14. I have had regard to the appellant's personal circumstances. Whilst I am sure that the proposed development would be of some benefit in assisting with these circumstances, I am mindful that, in general, planning decisions should be made in the public interest. Accordingly, for the preceding reasons, I do not consider that these circumstances outweigh my previous concerns. Furthermore, such benefits would not necessarily apply to all future occupiers of the proposed development.

15. I acknowledge that the proposed development is of an appropriate design and could be constructed from a suitable palette of materials. Whilst this is a matter of note, it is only one of all the issues that must be considered in assessing a proposed development. In consequence, this does not overcome my findings in respect of the Main Issue.
16. My attention has been drawn to various elements that can be included within the proposed development to aid environmental sustainability, in addition to the provision of a vegetable plot. Whilst such matters are of some benefit, they do not overcome the adverse effects arising from the location of the proposed development.

Conclusion

17. For the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR