
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 September 2020

by C Coyne BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D2510/W/20/3254833

Land adj. The Hollies, Northgate Lane, Grimoldby LN11 8TG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Oliver Towl against the decision of East Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref N/067/00430/20, dated 5 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'Re submission of N/067/00855/19 – Outline erection of 3 dwellings'. (sic)
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council have described the development as 'Outline erection of 3no. dwellings'. I note that the appellant has also utilised this description on their appeal form. I consider that this revision provides a succinct and accurate description of the proposal and I have therefore determined the appeal on this basis.
3. The application has been submitted in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration. I have dealt with the proposal on that basis, treating details such as those on the proposed site plan as being indicative only.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the site is a suitable location for residential development; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises an open field located next to a dwelling within a grouping of buildings on the outer edge of Grimoldby a predominately residential village set within a wider rural landscape. The existing development pattern for the housing within the main built-up area of the village largely consists of buildings being clustered around the road network, sometimes in a linear layout fronting onto one of these roads, with agricultural fields surrounding them.
6. There are also some smaller groupings of dwellings that are separated from the main built-up area, but which are located on smaller roads connected to the

village. Whilst the part of Northgate Lane where the appeal site is located is predominately residential, I consider its character to be intrinsically rural.

Whether a suitable location

7. Policy SP1 of the adopted East Lindsey Local Plan Core Strategy 2018 (CS) aims to guide the distribution, scale and nature of future development to create a sustainable pattern of places and identifies Grimoldby as a Large Village.
8. Policy SP3 of the CS sets out the broad spatial distribution of housing across the district including in Large Villages. It also only supports windfall housing on unallocated sites that are in appropriate locations within the settlement and outside of, but immediately adjacent to the developed footprint of the settlement. It also sets out several criteria for a site to be classified as an appropriate location and defines the developed footprint of a settlement as '*the continuous built form of the settlement*' which excludes '*groups of dispersed buildings which are clearly detached from the continuous built form of the settlement*'.
9. Consequently, the proposed residential development would need to meet the criteria set out within Policies SP1 and SP3 for it to be acceptable in principle.
10. The indicative proposal would be located on a greenfield site at the end of a row of detached buildings fronting Northgate Lane and there are also buildings directly opposite the appeal site also fronting onto the lane. As a result, I consider that the proposal would be part of the group of buildings on this part of Northgate Lane. Save for one detached dwelling located in between, there is a large gap consisting of open agricultural land between this group of buildings and the dwellings located at the junction of Northgate Lane and Tinkle Street. There is also a sizeable gap comprising open fields between the buildings at this junction and those located further along Tinkle Street which are connected to the more built-up area of the settlement which runs towards Carlton Road and the larger linked settlement of Manby.
11. I therefore consider that the group of buildings to which the proposal would belong, to be clearly detached from the continuous built form of the wider settlement of Grimoldby/Manby and consequently to also not be immediately adjacent to its developed footprint.
12. I acknowledge: the presence of the belt of mature trees to the side of the appeal site; that the proposal would not go beyond this; and that the residential development opposite the appeal site already projects in a linear fashion further along Northgate Lane towards its junction with Tinkle Street. However, this does not necessarily mean that the proposal would be within the developed footprint of the settlement.
13. The indicative proposed development is in outline with all matters reserved. However, the appellant has indicated that the scheme could provide up to three dwellings. Paragraph 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) promotes sustainable development in rural areas where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. In relation to economic and community benefits, the proposed housing would provide a boost to the local economy and businesses which would help to sustain services within the village.
14. However, these economic and community benefits would be dependent on residents being able to sustainably access many of their service needs within the more built-up part of the settlement. From the evidence before me and what I saw on my site visit, the nearest services and facilities within Grimoldby comprise a

- school and convenience store which would be located approximately 1 mile from the appeal site with others being located in the nearby larger settlement of Manby.
15. I acknowledge that these services would be within a reasonable cycling distance of the proposed development and that Northgate Lane is partially lit with Tinkle Street also having more street lighting. However, the appeal site would not be connected to Tinkle Street by way of a footpath. Northgate Lane is also very narrow, which I consider would make it likely that future residents would use the private car to travel to the more built-up area of the settlement to obtain their goods and services. This would also be much more likely during darker winter months and at other times where daylight would be limited. Consequently, I consider that the proposed development would not reduce the reliance of residents on private vehicles to obtain their day-to-day goods and services.
 16. Additionally, the appeal site is a greenfield site. Therefore, I consider that the replacement of this greenfield site with housing development would not provide a clear environmental benefit.
 17. Accordingly, taking into account all of the factors discussed above, and being mindful of paragraph 103 of the Framework, I am not satisfied that the appeal site is a suitable location for residential development. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would conflict with Policies SP1 and SP3 of the CS which collectively aim to deliver sustainable development and ensure that new housing is in sustainable locations. It would also conflict with paragraphs 8 and 78 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which aim to achieve sustainable development and to promote it in rural areas.

Character and Appearance

18. The appeal site is located on an open piece of agricultural land situated between an existing dwelling and a belt of high mature protected trees. There are also several high mature protected trees on its front boundary which make a positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area. In addition, there is a small cluster of mature trees behind the appeal site and a sizeable gap either side of this cluster which visually and physically link the site to the more open agricultural land beyond it.
19. The detached dwelling to the side of the appeal site is the last one in a row of five which I consider constitute a built-up frontage. Consequently, I also consider that the appeal site provides well-defined visual relief in an otherwise built-up frontage even though there are several mature trees on its front boundary. Furthermore, even though there is a cluster of trees behind the appeal site, these do not block the view to the more open countryside beyond it which the indicative proposal would be more likely to do. As a result, I consider that the indicative proposal would have an adverse visual impact and thereby a significant negative effect on the rural character and appearance of the area.
20. I accept that the presence of the belt of high mature protected trees to the side of the appeal site means that the indicative proposal would not represent a visual extension of ribbon development into the open countryside. However, even so, given my findings above, I consider that it would potentially result in the loss of an open space that provides well-defined visual relief, nonetheless.
21. I acknowledge that the appeal scheme is indicative and that design issues could be looked at in more detail and even potentially resolved at reserved matters stage. However, given the considerations above, I cannot be certain that this would be the case.

22. I also acknowledge that none of the high mature protected trees on the front boundary would be removed and that this would maintain their positive contribution to the visual amenity of the area and provide some screening of the proposal. However, this would not overcome or outweigh the harm that the proposal would cause by obscuring views of the more open agricultural land behind it or by developing an open green space that currently provides well defined visual relief in an otherwise built-up frontage.
23. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would materially harm the character and appearance of the area thereby failing to meet the requirements of Policies SP10, SP23 and SP25 of the CS. It would also conflict with paragraphs 127 and 170 of the Framework which aim to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character and landscape setting and recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, amongst other considerations.

Other Matters

24. I note the appellant's points with regards to two other proposals for residential development being recently permitted on this part of Northgate Lane (Ref N/067/01302/19 & Ref N/067/02270/17). However, the circumstances applicable to these schemes¹ are not exactly the same as those presented in this case, which I have determined on its own merits, as both these schemes were located on sites with residential properties on either side, so in effect meaning that they were infill development. In any event, the existence of other similar development proposals in the locality does not outweigh my findings in respect of the suitability of the appeal site for residential development or the character and appearance of the area.
25. I also acknowledge that several letters of support for the proposal from neighbouring occupiers. However, this is not of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm I have identified above and neither this nor the other matters raised alter or outweigh my conclusions on the main issues.

Conclusion

26. The proposed development would be contrary to the adopted development plan and there are no material considerations indicating a decision otherwise in accordance with it. For the reasons set out above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Coyne

INSPECTOR

¹ Appellant Statement of Case Appendix 2