



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 October 2020

by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/E2340/W/20/3256958

Whitemoor Pump Station, High Lane, Salterforth BB18 5SN

- 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 Dalfour Ltd against the decision of Pendle Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/0064/FUL, dated 27 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 30 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 26 holiday lodges with associated facilities; parking; landscaping and new vehicular access from High Lane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposal would represent sustainable rural tourism development.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located within open countryside between a disused quarry and waterworks. The site predominantly comprises sloping grassland and includes a number of mature trees that are mainly concentrated around the access track. Access to the proposed development would be taken from High Lane (B6251). Using this road, the site is approximately 1.5km to the nearest settlement, Salterforth and approximately 2km to Barnoldswick. There is a public right of way opposite the site access.
4. Policy ENV4 of the Pendle Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) outlines that proposals should minimise the need to travel by ensuring they are developed in appropriate locations close to existing or proposed services and that new developments should, wherever possible, exploit opportunities for walking and cycling by connecting to existing pedestrian and cycle routes.
5. Policy WRK5 of the Pendle Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) outlines that proposals associated with the provision of new facilities for tourism will be supported where they, amongst other things, promote sustainable tourism associated with walking, cycling; and do not result in a significant increase in car usage and are readily accessible by public transport, and sustainable modes of transport (e.g. walking and cycling).
6. The appeal proposal would be situated in an open rural location and would not be within a defined settlement boundary, although it would not be overly

distant from the facilities and services of Salterforth and Barnoldswick. These include shops, restaurants, public houses and local bus services. There is not a bus stop within close proximity of the appeal site, the closest being within Salterforth.

7. Despite the proximity to Salterforth and Barnoldswick, the routes that pedestrians would need to take to access their facilities and services are of poor quality. There is no footpath at the side of the road until reaching one of the above settlements and there is no streetlighting in place. The lack of any refuge areas for pedestrians to avoid vehicles also serves to demonstrate that this would not provide a safe route for pedestrians.
8. There is a public right of way opposite the site access that links to other public rights of way in the area. These routes are not clearly defined and are for the most part unlit with changing ground conditions that would be highly susceptible to wet weather. I consider that whilst such routes would no doubt provide pleasant recreational routes, it is very unlikely that users of the development or staff would regularly use these routes to access local services and facilities, particularly during hours of darkness, in bad weather or when carrying bags of shopping.
9. The provision for cycling is less inharmonious. This is largely due to the proximity of the site to the National Cycle Route. I do however consider that this, and the proximity to the Tour of Britain route, are more likely to reflect recreational attractions and pursuits rather than as a primary means of travel for day-to-day use. Users of the development would be less likely to cycle to and from Salterforth or Barnoldswick when carrying shopping which would result in reliance on use of a car as a means to meet day-to-day needs. The cycling provision to these local services and facilities relies on the use of existing roads which may dissuade potential use by families or less assured cyclists.
10. The provision of an on-site shop and the adoption of measures outlined in the Interim Travel Plan would go some way to alleviating the reliance on private cars both in terms of accessing the proposed development and day-to-day use. I consider that their effectiveness would be limited in terms of the overall number of trips, where for the reasons outlined, the majority of users would rely on car travel. The measures therefore would not be sufficient to avoid a significant increase in car usage. Additionally, they do not account for the proposal being largely inaccessible by public transport or having poor pedestrian linkages.
11. I have no reason to doubt the appellants honest intentions to create a sustainable form of development. However, the provision of driveways for each lodge, a new vehicular access track and the provision of relatively large areas for parking and drop off would strongly appear to run contrary to the aim of minimising travel by car. It would point towards an almost inevitable acknowledgement that the development would result in a significant increase in car usage.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not be sustainably located and would lead to a significant increase in car usage. It would not represent a sustainable form of rural tourism and would be contrary to Policies ENV4 and WRK5 of the Pendle Local Plan Core Strategy (2015) which require,

amongst other things that tourist developments are readily accessible by sustainable modes of travel, not resulting in a significant increase in car usage.

13. The proposal would also be contrary to sustainability aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) (2019) including paragraph 83 which supports sustainable rural tourism.

Other Matters

14. The proposal would provide economic benefits in terms of employment from the use of the site and during construction, and also with a knock-on impact in relation to tourist spend in the surrounding area. These economic benefits weigh strongly in favour of the proposal; however they do not outweigh the significant harm I have identified in relation to accessibility by sustainable travel modes and the increase in car usage that would occur.
15. There is no evidence before me that the design and layout of the development, combined with increased landscaping would harm the character or appearance of the area. There is also no evidence before me that the development would have a harmful effect upon highway safety, biodiversity or flood risk. These matters are not however pertinent to the main issue, and the absence of harm in these respects is a neutral factor.
16. Similarly, the adoption of sustainable construction methods, and the installation of features such as wood burning stoves, solar panels and electric vehicle charging points, which although being positive aspects of the scheme, only serve to contribute to the expectation of sustainable development. I give these matters little weight.
17. The appellant considers that the proposal would comply with paragraph 84 of the Framework. This paragraph refers to sites to meet local business and community needs. There is limited evidence that the proposed development is required to meet local business or community needs. Even if this were to be the case, the proposal would not, as is required, exploit opportunities to make the location more sustainable (for example by improving the scope for access on foot, by cycling or by public transport). Regardless, for the reasons given above, the proposal does not represent a sustainable form of development.
18. Reference is made to the Council's consideration of similar developments in the surrounding area. I do not have full details of these cases. The merits of these decisions are not before me. They relate to different locations and I have determined the appeal on its own individual merits.
19. I appreciate that Council officers recommended approval of the application to the planning committee. However, it was within the committee's gift to make a decision on the application contrary to the officer recommendation, thus this consideration has had no bearing on my decision.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal be dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR