



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2021

by Mrs H Nicholls FdA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9 February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/P1133/W/20/3257413

Longfield Stables Caravan Park, Humber Lane, Kingsteignton TQ12 3FL

- 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 Martin Tooze against the decision of Teignbridge District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02152/FUL, dated 4 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is change of use of the existing utilities building to a residential dwelling for the use of the site manager.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for change of use for the existing Utilities Building to a residential dwelling for the use of the site manager at Longfield Stables Caravan Park, Humber Lane, Kingsteignton, TQ12 3FL, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/02152/FUL, dated 4 November 2019, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary matter

2. I have used the description from the Council's decision notice as it more concisely describes the development.
3. I saw that the building was already in situ and being used for residential purposes. I have therefore considered the matter as a retrospective development.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the location of the development accords with local and national policies which seek to locate housing to minimise the need to travel and protect the intrinsic character of the countryside.

Reasons

5. Longfield Stables Caravan Park is an established touring accommodation facility on the outskirts of Kingsteignton. It has approximately 22 pitches, a central children's play area and a WC/shower block. The reception and office room is attached to the building which is subject of the appeal and that is in use as a manager's dwelling.
6. The site is located on Humber Lane which extends from the main urban area of Kingsteignton. The site is separated from the extent of residential development on Humber Lane by the A380 overpass.

7. Policy S21A of the Teignmouth Local Plan 2013 – 2033 (adopted 2014) (Local Plan) defines the extent of the settlement limits for the main settlements, including Kingsteignton. The Policy states that within the settlement limit, development will be permitted where it is consistent with the other policies and provisions of the Local Plan. The overarching theme of the Local Plan is to direct new residential development to the most sustainable locations that limit the need to travel by private vehicles by providing good access via a range of travel modes to the identified towns and villages.
8. Policy S22 identifies that development outside of the settlement limits in open countryside will be strictly limited to preserve the countryside and maintain the sustainability of settlements. The nature of developments that are permissible under Policy S22 includes affordable housing for local needs and dwellings for agricultural, forestry and other necessary rural workers.
9. The site is outside of the settlement limit of Kingsteignton. It is located approximately 145 metres from the closest point of the settlement limit and the A380 forms a clear delineation of the extent of the built form. The site therefore falls to be considered as open countryside under the Local Plan. Policy S22 provides provision for other necessary rural workers, which may extend to workers that are required to reside at their place of business or employment. The current proposal is promoted as one such development, where the residential use of the building is sought on the basis that an onsite manager is needed at all times to manage the year-round tourism facility.
10. The range of evidence supporting the need for the development is far from extensive. However, from the evidence available and from my observations on site, it was apparent that the management of the site was undertaken by the appellant and that his oversight of the facility took place within an office and reception space that formed an integral part of the dwelling. The dwelling is modest in size, has clearly been occupied for some time and enabled the continued operation of the site during that period. Whilst the intensity of use of the site is currently reduced owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, this is not anticipated to be a long-term term.
11. From the details before me, I am of the view that there are sufficiently evidenced requirements for the appellant to reside at the premises and that the proposal meets the basic conditions of Policy S22. The site is not far from Kingsteignton and given the frequency of trips to and from the site that would be necessitated if he lived elsewhere, within Kingsteignton or further afield, the dismissal of the appeal would likely lead to a greater number of movements that run counter to the overall aims of the Local Plan to minimise travel.
12. With an occupational condition in place, the dwelling would retain the manager at the site for a great proportion of his time to meet the frequent demands of the business and its guests. The number of trips to supermarkets, healthcare facilities and other local services would be likely to be more infrequent and, in the case of the appeal site relative to Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot, over a relatively short distance. In addition, access by the resident manager to such local facilities would be possible on foot or cycle. Whilst there is an absence of footways on Humber Lane, this is only for a very limited stretch in the immediate vicinity of the site. There is more limited streetlighting but this would not preclude journeys by foot or bicycle being made in the daytime.

13. However, and though not cited in its decision notice, I am mindful that the Council has had limited opportunity to thoroughly examine the proposal in the context of Local Plan Policy WE9, particularly in respect of the financial stability of the business. Thus, it is also appropriate to allow a temporary residential use, to allow a trial-run and for the re-examination of the business needs and finances again in the context of Policy WE9 at the end of the temporary period.
14. In terms of the protection of the intrinsic characteristics of the countryside, the building forms part of the Caravan Park and does not extend development further onto undeveloped agricultural land. It is a low, single storey building which is not particularly visible beyond the boundaries of the site and there is no suggestion that alterations would be necessary that would increase its visibility within the site or elsewhere.
15. Given the above considerations, and subject to conditions, the development accords with Policies S1, S1A, S21, S22 and WE9 that seek to locate housing in order to minimise the need to travel and protect the intrinsic character of the countryside. For similar reasons, it also accords with the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

16. The Council's second reason for refusal asserts that there is an adequate five year supply of housing land in the area (5YHLS). No changes to this status was brought to my attention in the context of the recent publication of the Housing Delivery Test Results (2020). However, as I have found the proposal to accord with the development plan, insofar as it would locate a dwelling in the countryside to meet a specific need, but, also in a manner that limits the resident managers need to travel elsewhere or for long distances, the 5YHLS factor is not decisive.

Conditions

17. In the interests of certainty and to protect the character and appearance of the area, a condition is necessary to ensure that the development is retained in accordance with the submitted plans. This meets the Parish Council's desire for the building height to be maintained as single storey.
18. Given that the specific justification for the residential use in the countryside has arisen due to the existence of the Caravan Park, a condition is necessary to limit the occupation of the dwelling as such. Furthermore, to test whether such a need persists in the long-term, the permission is to be limited to a period of three years initially in accordance with Local Plan Policy WE9.

Conclusion

19. In view of the conclusions reached above, the development complies with the development plan. There are no considerations to indicate that a decision should be taken other than in accordance therewith.
20. Accordingly, and taking into account all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

Hollie Nicholls

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE OF CONDITIONS

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out and retained in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Site location plan, received 12 December 2019
 - Block Plan, Ref LS/11, dated 29.10.2019
 - Floor Plan, Ref LS/12, dated 29.10.2019
 - Elevations, Ref LS/13, dated 29.10.2019
- 2) The building shall be used solely as residential accommodation for persons whose main employment is at Longfield Stables Caravan Park for a limited period being the period of three years from the date of this decision. At the end of this period the residential use hereby permitted shall cease, and the building shall revert back to use as a utilities building for purposes ancillary to the use of the site as a caravan park and for no other purpose.