

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 February 2021

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/E0915/W/20/3260935

**Land adjacent the Coach House, Allenwood, Heads Nook,
Brampton CA8 9AG**

- 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 M Johnson against the decision of Carlisle City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/0971, dated 27 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 28 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is an outline application for residential development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have adopted the address set out on the Council's decision notice and the appellant's appeal form as it is usefully more comprehensive than that initially set out on the planning application form.
3. The application has been submitted in outline form with all matters reserved for subsequent consideration. No indicative plans have been submitted and the application form does not state the proposed quantum of development, although the accompanying Planning Statement and Appeal Statements both refer to the proposal being for up to four dwellings. I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether or not the appeal site is an appropriate location for housing, having regard to the development plan, national planning policy and other material considerations.

Reasons

5. The appeal site was used as a car park in connection with the former Coach House public house, which has since been converted to residential use and is known as Allenwood House. Elements of the former car park use, particular remaining areas of hard-standing, can still be seen in places within the appeal site. The appeal site lies adjacent to a small group of houses in the open countryside formed by the now converted Allenwood House and two cottages on the crossroads junction a short distance to the west of the appeal. Such sporadic clusters of houses are not an uncommon feature within the open, expansive and gently rolling countryside in which the appeal site lies.

6. The nearest identified settlement, Heads Nook is less than a mile to the southeast of the site, whilst the larger settlement of Warwick Bridge lies approximately 1½ miles to the northwest. Neither are within easy walking distance of the appeal site although both settlements would be reasonably easily accessible by bicycle and, at the time of my visit to the site, I saw several walkers walking along the road between the appeal site and Heads Nook. However, the absence of footways, or even reasonably consistent, wide and smooth grass verges, in either northerly or southerly directions would be unlikely to encourage pedestrians to access the limited services and facilities in Heads Nook, or the wider range of facilities in Warwick Bridge, on a day-to-day basis.
7. Carlisle Local Plan (CLP) policy SP2 sets out the Council's settlement strategy within its approach to strategic growth and distribution of development. Thus, within the open countryside, development will be assessed against its need to be in the location proposed. CLP policies HO2, HO5 and HO6 consider windfall housing development, rural exception sites and housing in the open countryside, respectively.
8. It is acknowledged by the appellant that the site does not lie within a settlement. I agree, there is no doubt in my mind as to the site's open countryside location. The site is not well related to settlements with a range of services or facilities and so the proposal gains no support from CLP policy HO2 in terms of good access to villages or other settlements, whilst the appellant concedes that CLP policy HO5 is not applicable. Nor has a case been made in respect of the provisions of CLP policy HO6 in terms of the proposal providing housing for an essential rural worker. The proposal is clearly not for the construction of a replacement dwelling or dwellings, nor does it involve the conversion of existing buildings. There is therefore no support for the proposal from the provisions of CLP policies HO2, HO5 or HO6, or from SP2.
9. Although the appeal site does not lie in an isolated location, nor is it, for reasons set out above, well related to settlements with services or facilities. There can be little doubt that the appeal site is previously developed land (PDL), particularly in those parts of the site where the remains of the car park are clearly visible. CLP policy SP2(6) encourages the re-use and redevelopment of previously developed land across the District. This is, however, qualified as only 'where possible and appropriate'.
10. The proposal would redevelop PDL, and I concur with the appellant's view that this should carry weight in support of the proposal. However, the site is not well-located relative to services and facilities in Heads Nook or Warwick Bridge and its development would not, in the parlance of CLP policy SP2(6), be appropriate. The proposal gains no support from CLP policy SP2(6) in this respect and the weight I give to the site's PDL status, whilst noting the broad encouragement given by the Framework to the efficient use of land, is limited within its, and the CLP's, broad aims of encouraging sustainable patterns of development.

Other Matters

11. The appeal site lies adjacent to the converted former Coach House public house and was, I understand, granted planning permission in 2014¹. Although the

¹ Appellant Grounds of Appeal Appendix 2 - LPA Ref No: 14/0398

appellant contends that there has been no material change in circumstances locally since then, the appended decision notice for that permission clearly refers to an earlier version of the Carlisle District Local Plan. However, that development was a conversion and change of use of an existing building not the construction of new-build dwellings, for which the current CLP sets out specific provision and support.

12. I do not therefore consider the adjacent scheme of conversion to be directly comparable and it provides little support to the principle of the scheme before me. Nor does a previously approved scheme for the redevelopment of the appeal site for the provision of holiday chalets² which lapsed without implementation.
13. I have noted the absence of objection to the proposal from neighbours and also, albeit within the context of an outline application for planning permission with all matters reserved, from the Council in terms of scale and design, living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties and highways and drainage matters. Together with matters relating to ground conditions arising from the previously developed nature of the appeal site, such matters could adequately and appropriately be dealt with by way of standard conditions on an outline planning permission, and by specific conditions. However, such factors weigh neither in support of nor against the proposal and do not justify a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR

² LPA Ref No: 15/0148