



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 January 2022

by Alison Scott (BA Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P2935/W/21/3281514

North Farm, Embleton Main Street, Embleton, NE66 3DX

- 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 R Manners against the decision of Northumberland County Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02536/FUL, dated 3 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 5 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is Retrospective Planning Permission for the installation of hard standing, electricity and water points, alterations to access and other ancillary works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The land in question is laid out with hardstanding's and utility points capable of supplying two caravans per point. At the time of my visit, no caravans occupied the site although the works appeared to be complete.
3. Since the time the application was submitted to the Council, the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) has been published and replaces the Framework published in 2019. I have made my decision on the basis of the most up to date Framework.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located outside the settlement of Embleton and is a parcel of agricultural land that has been laid out for the purposes of siting touring caravans. A ranch style timber fence encloses part of the land where the caravans can be stationed, with a large standing area separate to this at the access point from the main road.
6. The site forms part of the largely open, rural landscape with hedgerows flanking the main road which defines the approach into the village from the west.
7. Rather than forming part of the existing built form, visually, physically and functionally, the site clearly sits within the countryside away from the

settlement that constitutes a typical rural scene and contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area. In addition, the site is not sufficiently close to neighbouring farm buildings to be considered to be absorbed into their environment.

8. Despite the undulating topography of the land, the site is level ground and conspicuous in the landscape. This is due to the large hardstanding areas for stationing caravans that are laid out with small irregularly shaped pockets laid to grass and arranged in an orderly fashion. In addition, the mouth of the access is wide into the set down area that also contains large quantities of hardstanding area and allows good visual exposure from the road into the site. The dark coloured surface stone material jars with the verdant landscape. The various services that form part of the scheme add to the uncharacteristic features that are not representative of a typical rural countryside context.
9. The appellant comments that hardstandings are typical of the local area although no examples of similar developments have been brought to my attention to compare.
10. The hardstanding areas may provide a better surface to station caravans and even with the surrounding landscaping and the appellant's suggestion to increase planting around the site, would not mitigate the impact of extending intrusive development into the open countryside.
11. The appellant considers that the land is of limited agricultural use due to its size. However, no evidence has been provided to substantiate their claim. The local area may be known for its tourism industry, to which this would be a contributing factor, and the use of the land to station touring caravans may not require planning permission. However, even with these things considered, the development harmfully erodes the rural character of the local area to which I apportion considerable weight.
12. Therefore, to conclude on this matter, the proposed development adversely harms the rural character and appearance of the local area contrary to Policy S16 of the Alnwick Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2007 in its general design aims and the Framework in its objectives to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Conclusion

13. Due to the harm arising to the character and appearance of the open countryside, the proposed development would lead to conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Alison Scott

INSPECTOR