



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 February 2022

by R Hitchcock BSc(Hons) DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/B2002/W/21/3282069

Valley Cottage, The Avenue, East Ravendale DN37 0RX

- 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 Aidan Jones against the decision of North East Lincolnshire Council.
 - The application Ref DM/0350/21/FUL, dated 30 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is to demolish an existing dwelling, erect new dwelling with a detached garage, a detached barn / stables block with boundary treatments, access, landscaping and boundary ditches.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address in the banner heading above is taken from the planning application form. However, the Council's Decision Notice uses the alternative of Valley Cottage, Hatcliffe Road, West Ravendale, North East Lincolnshire. This address is also used by the appellant on the appeal form. For the purposes of the appeal, I have relied on the Hatcliffe Road address as that used by the Council as the administrative body for the locality.
3. During the course of the Council's consideration of the planning application, amended plans were submitted by the appellant showing some minor alterations to the scheme. These were the plans on which the Council made its decision and I have proceeded on the same basis.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the locality and the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

5. The site consists of a sloping grassed field and a modest detached bungalow bordered by gardens close to the northern side of the road. The house is backed by a plantation of trees and shares a side boundary with 'Highfield', a residential property to the west. The road wanders through the lower part of a gentle rural valley.
6. The site is situated in the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which, in the locality, is a rural landscape of gently undulating land divided into predominantly arable fields separated by hedging. The area has occasional pockets of trees and some linear plantations. The limited

buildings are generally in small, isolated clusters. Together, these characteristics provide a positive sense of openness across the landscape.

7. The proposal would see the demolition of the existing bungalow and replacement with a 2-storey dwelling. The building, lying parallel to the road and extending further east in the plot, would have a 2-storey rear return and single storey study to the side. A detached garage with store above would be located forward of the dwelling at the end of a new terraced driveway bordered by hedging close to the roadside verge, which would be regraded.
8. An 'L' form 5-stall stable block with store and an additional storage building arranged about a new yard area are proposed in the adjacent field. The range would lie close to the edge of the plantation and be set well back from the roadside. The buildings would be served by an extended driveway with additional areas of hardstanding adjacent to them. Landscaping within the field and to its borders, including new hedging and drainage ditches, are also proposed.
9. Section 85 of The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires me to have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by, amongst other things, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.
10. Paragraph 17 of the Framework states that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the scenic beauty of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest level of protection in relation to these issues. The Framework is clear that the scale and extent of development within these areas should be limited.
11. Although the proposed dwelling would be based on a vernacular design, it would have considerable overall width and depth. Compared to the existing dwelling and those nearby, it would boast a significantly greater overall height. The high gables, substantial continuous frontage and deep return would give rise to a building of significant massing. The subsequent bulk, set on higher ground than the existing building and with reduced screening to the east, would cause it to appear prominent in its setting.
12. The effect would be increased by the offset position and scale of the large garage. When seen from the main public viewpoints to the south and east of the site, the garage would increase the perception of the overall scale and spread of the domestic buildings.
13. The proposed stable building would provide for the keeping of up to 5 horses. In addition, a storage area and storage building would be provided about an area of levelled hardstanding. The cumulative size of the buildings is significant for the intended purpose of accommodating five horses on the land. The buildings incorporate relatively large stall areas and ancillary storage elements which would exceed the stabling component in all dimensions and by some degree.
14. The use of a modest store for feed, bedding and tack is commonplace on most modern stable buildings. According to the appellant there is an additional need

for the storage of associated equipment, however, there is little qualification of what that storage would be and how the significant height of the larger store is necessary to accommodate it. In the context of a protected landscape, I am not persuaded that that element of the proposal is either small or limited for the proposed use of the modest area of land.

15. Furthermore, the use of hardwearing materials in the construction of the stable and storage buildings would give them a formal appearance. The effect on the protected landscape would be permanent and such that the building would potentially outlast the informal use for which it is intended. It would not therefore be a sustainable approach to recreational development in the AONB.
16. Moreover, the location, detached from the group formed by the roadside dwellings, would be a significant incursion into an open area and result in a broad spread of development. The increased spacing between the neighbouring dwellings and remote position of the stables, with attendant requirement for linking access infrastructure and engineering of the ground levels, would introduce a significant sense of development. It would neither reflect the characteristic close grouping of isolated development or the traditional tight clusters of buildings associated with rural farmsteads.
17. The effects of the largely exposed deep eastern elevation of the dwelling, the roadside garage and proposed location of the stables and stores on a rising field would be highly visible on approach along the frontage road from the east. Travelling west from the village along the road, the buildings would be framed by the initial roadside tree lines to focus views towards the developed area. Although the new field boundary and proposed woodland pockets would reduce that effect upon maturity, this would only achieve partial screening and require significant time to establish.
18. The proposed landscaping would be considerably less effective in the wider landscape views. The development would be particularly pronounced from the rising bridleway to the south and the upper section of the B1203 running north from East Ravendale. Clear downward views of the large buildings, the associated large areas of hardstandings, retaining walls and land profiling would be prominent within the lower valley from those vantage points. The proposed planting would not mitigate what would be a considerable adverse effect on the landscape and a significant incursion into the open character of this part of the AONB.
19. There is no dispute from the appellant that the proposal would be prominent. In support of this, the appellant refers to precedent development of both prominent houses and large stables. However, there is little evidence before me of specific examples in their contexts. Precedent is rarely an argument that should carry great weight in planning decisions which should be made on their own merits in the context of the development plan and other material considerations. Moreover, the existence of development elsewhere does not represent an appropriate reason to find in favour of a proposal that would cause harm or lead me to alter my findings on this issue.
20. I acknowledge that the siting of the buildings would avoid adverse impacts on protected trees within the plantation to retain their landscape value. Furthermore, I have little doubt that the recent and proposed planting would reinstate the local characteristic field boundaries and contribute additional pockets of trees on maturity. Alongside new ditches, they would doubtlessly

lead to biodiversity enhancements on those parts of the site. However, the benefits therein would not outweigh the harm to the quality landscape arising from the combined development.

21. For the above reasons, I find that the combined scale and siting of the proposals would fail to protect the open character and appearance of the landscape area. It would conflict with Policies 5, 22 and 42 of the North East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2013-2032 [2018] as they require development to respond to a site's context and local distinctiveness, and to protect and enhance landscape quality character areas and the natural beauty of the AONB.

Other Matters

22. The appellant's willingness to work with the Council in the run up to the submission of the planning application and the supporting recommendation to its Planning Committee are noted. Nevertheless, it is open to a Council to determine the planning application on its individual merits against the development plan and with regard to any relevant material considerations. Accordingly, these are neutral matters in the determination of this appeal.
23. I note that there have been no objections from statutory consultees on matters such as highways, drainage, biodiversity and archaeology. As requirements of the development plan these are not benefits in favour of the development.
24. I acknowledge the degree of support received from some third parties, particularly in relation to the proposed style of the dwelling compared to the existing building, the potential benefits to family living and the contribution to the vitality of the area. However, those benefits are not necessarily dependent on the specific detail of the scheme before me. They are therefore of limited weight in favour of the proposal.
25. I acknowledge the other concerns of some third parties. However, pursuant to my finding on the main issue, my decision does not turn on those matters.

Conclusion

26. For the reasons given above, I have found that the proposal would fail to preserve the landscape and scenic beauty of the Lincolnshire Wolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Whilst the proposals would provide some biodiversity benefits, these would not outweigh the harm I have identified. Consequently, the appeal proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and the appeal should be dismissed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR