



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2022

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/22/3295875

Garage, Workshop & Storage Building, Moorelake, Barholm Road, Tallington, PE9 4RJ

- 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 Craig Moore against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref S21/2529, dated 23 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is the conversion of a garage, workshop & storage building to provide a dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal site would be a suitable location for the development having regard to the development plan and national policy.

Reasons

3. The appeal building is situated to the eastern side of Barholm Road and next to a large lake. It is currently associated with the dwelling at Moorelake Lodge. To the south towards the junction with Stamford Road there is a use car sales lot. Tallington Lakes Leisure Park is accessed further to the north along Barholm Road. There are also other developments in close proximity to the site including but not limited to a pre-cast concrete plant on the opposite side of Barholm Road. The appeal site is located in the countryside for the purposes of decision making.
4. The first part of Policy SP5 of the South Kesteven District Council Local Plan (2020) (LP) confirms that development in the open countryside will be limited to that which has an essential need to be located outside the existing built form of a settlement.
5. While the site is located close to other developments in the area, the site is set well away from the built form of the nearest recognisable settlement, village or hamlet and there is no public footpath or street lighting connecting the site to such settlements. Accordingly, I find that the site is isolated in the terms described in the Framework.
6. Paragraph 80 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that planning decisions should avoid the development of isolated homes in the countryside unless it meets one or more of the specific circumstances set

out under that paragraph. The appellant contends that the proposal would meet criteria 80 a) of the Framework in terms of meeting an essential need for a rural worker. This is also pertinent to my considerations in respect of the first part of Policy SP5 of the LP.

7. The intended occupier of the dwelling is a professional wakeskater / wakeboarder who both trains on and manages a business at the adjacent lake. However, other than meaning the occupier would be conveniently located for training and work, there is no substantive evidence before me to justify a permanent presence on the site for example to ensure the effective operation of the business or to address the type of security or animal welfare requirements that might usually be associated with a rural worker. I am not persuaded that the intended occupant's personal desire to live close to the lakes could not be met for example by living in a nearby settlement.
8. Therefore, there is not an essential need to locate a new dwelling outside the existing built form of a settlement and the proposal therefore conflicts with Policy SP5 and the Framework. It is only in such instances where development meets the first part of Policy SP5 where the policy goes on to support specific types of development.
9. Notwithstanding the above, I acknowledge that not all of the development in the immediate locality positively reflects the prevailing rural character of the area. I also accept that the appeal building incorporates good quality facing materials in terms of its stone walls and slate roof.
10. However, the building's very substantial and overtly domestic form and appearance, emphasised by its uPVC windows and doors, do not positively reflect a rural location. Indeed, from what I saw on site, such buildings are not a common feature of the local vernacular. The alterations to the building which include a flat roofed extension to the elevation closest to Barholm Road, several new ground and roof level windows, as well as a dormer with French doors opening onto a large balcony, would further domesticate the building which would detract from the prevailing rural character of the area. This would be evident to visitors to the lakes as well as in glimpsed views from the road during the winter when some of the boundary vegetation is not in leaf.
11. Therefore, even if there was an essential need for this development to be located outside the existing built form of a settlement, the proposal would not in any case meet criteria d) and f) under the second part of Policy SP5.
12. Any sustainability benefits accrued through the intended occupier's reduced need to travel to training and work would be somewhat diminished by the heavy reliance on the private motor vehicle to access the nearest meaningful services and facilities in the wider locality. The proposal would therefore also conflict with the sustainable transport requirements of the Framework and Policy ID2 (Transport and Strategic Transport Infrastructure). This further persuades me that the appeal site is not a suitable location for the proposal.
13. I conclude, the appeal site would not be a suitable location for the proposed dwelling having regard to the sustainable objectives of the development plan and national policy.

Other Matters

14. The appellant's planning statement suggests that the building is disused except for domestic storage and has an extant permission for a change of use to a clubhouse. Nevertheless, the proposal for a dwelling in the countryside conflicts with the development plan and given it is in use and the proposals would not enhance the immediate setting, the development would not meet any of the other exceptions for isolated homes in the Framework.
15. A condition to tie occupancy of the proposed dwelling to the wider use of the site and prevent it from being sold on the open market would not overcome the policy conflict identified.
16. There is some third-party support for the proposal. I accept that the existing business on the site likely brings visitors to the area with potential benefits for the local economy. Even so, any such benefits are unlikely to be of a magnitude that would be sufficient to outweigh the identified conflict with the development plan and the Framework. Furthermore, there is nothing before me to suggest the business would be unviable without residential occupancy of the appeal building.

Conclusion

17. The appeal site is not a suitable location for the development and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. It would also conflict with the sustainable objectives of the Framework. 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 be dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR