



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2022

by J Symmons BSc (Hons) CEng MICE

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th January 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/E0915/W/21/3285803

Southview Farm, The Green, Houghton, Carlisle CA3 0LN

- 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 Rodney Lovell against the decision of Carlisle City Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0299, dated 28 March 2021, was refused by notice dated 6 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as change of use of former equestrian manège to vehicle storage area.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site was formally a riding arena and is currently being used to store vehicles and, with the exception of the proposed fence and hedge screening, the development appears to reflect the details shown on the drawings. I have therefore considered this appeal on the basis that planning permission is sought retrospectively.
3. The site is subject to enforcement action against the development and an appeal against the enforcement notice was dismissed. This appeal has been solely based on the planning application refusal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the appropriateness of the location of the development.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site is located at the north western end of the rural village of Houghton. The development consists of a vehicle storage area for the appellant's Carlisle based car sales showroom business.
6. Although there are garden areas directly behind some of the properties, the majority of the land to the rear of the appeal site consists of agricultural fields separated by lines of fencing, hedgerows and trees. There are a number of agricultural and stable buildings in the area which have some associated

vehicle parking. However, these are relatively isolated and relate to the farming and equestrian use of the land. The appeal site's former manège use is consistent with the agricultural setting.

7. Policy GI1 of the Carlisle District Local Plan 2015-2030 (Local Plan) seeks to protect landscapes from excessive, harmful or inappropriate development. Proposals for development are assessed against the criteria presented within the Cumbria Landscape Character Guidance and Toolkit (CLCG). While the appellant identifies the area as being classified as sub-type 5d 'Urban Fringe' it is however, shown as sub-type 5b 'Low Farmland' on the mapping. The key characteristics of this landscape sub-type are set out in the CLCG and the overall vision is to conserve and enhance the landscape, wildlife and minimise urban intrusions.
8. The development is well screened from the private access road and the majority of the northern public footpath by hedgerows and planting. However, it is visible from the neighbouring property, Orchard Holme, Southview Farm's garden, a short section of the public footpath and the rear agricultural fields.
9. Even though the development is a relatively small-scale operation, and not in a highly prominent position, the parked vehicles create an urban intrusion which is visually at odds with the character and appearance of the surrounding area. While an additional hedgerow and new fence are proposed along the northern boundary as screening and landscape mitigation, the landscape improvements would be modest. Development would still be visually intrusive from parts of the surrounding area and negatively impact the rural setting. It would not be a sensitive or commensurate addition to the former manège or existing landscape. The nearby agricultural building does assist in providing some screening of the development. However, this does not remove the visual discord, or the adverse effects the development creates.
10. In conclusion, the development adversely affects the character and appearance of the area and conflicts with Policy GI1 of the Local Plan which aims to protect the intrinsic character of the landscape from excessive, harmful or inappropriate development.

Location

11. Criterion 7 of Policy SP2 of the Local Plan supports development, subject to it being of an appropriate scale and nature which is commensurate with its setting. It also requires that it positively contributes to increasing the prosperity of the rural economy and enable rural communities to thrive. This is supported by paragraph 81 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (the Framework) which states that planning policies and decisions should help create the conditions in which businesses can invest, expand and adapt. It further advises that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity. Paragraph 84 a) of the Framework reinforces this further by stating that planning policies and decisions should enable sustainable growth and expansion of all types of businesses in rural areas.
12. While the business does not provide direct employment opportunities or economic benefits to the village, this is not a specific requirement of the policy. However, as discussed above, the development has a harmful impact upon the character and appearance of the area. This is in terms of the appropriateness

of the scale and nature of a vehicle storage area within the rural setting as discussed previously. Furthermore, substantive evidence of how the development is positively contributing to increasing the prosperity of the rural economy and enabling rural communities to thrive has not been presented. Consequently, due to the lack of evidence minimal weight is attributed to the development benefits in supporting economic growth and productivity.

13. In conclusion the development is not appropriate for its location and as such, it conflicts with criterion 7 of Policy SP2 of the Local Plan and paragraph 84 of the Framework.

Other Matters

14. While the appellant contends that the Council has considered the appeal site as being in open countryside, other than a quoted reference made in the Officer Report regarding a 2013 application, I found no evidence that the appeal site was assessed as open countryside.
15. The appellant questions the consistency of the Council's determination of similar applications. While they provide 9 Lingyclose, Dalston as an example of a similar development being permitted, this site is relatively distant from the appeal site and in a different location and setting. Details regarding its impacts on character and appearance and its contribution to the rural economy and community are also limited. Accordingly, I cannot be certain that the circumstances are the same and therefore give little weight to this example. In any event each case should be considered on its individual planning merits.
16. It has been suggested by the appellant that a number of planning conditions could be used to restrict and control the use of the development. However, these would not remove all the concerns regarding the impacts on character and appearance or address how the development complies with the policies regarding rural economy and community benefits. I therefore do not consider the use of planning conditions would make the development acceptable.
17. In relation to third party representations, I saw no evidence of issues with the storage of caravans on Stonedale Farm. The Council has not raised concerns regarding environmental pollution and fire risk or traffic issues. Based on the information provided and my site observations, I see no reason to question any of these aspects.

Conclusion

18. The development would conflict with the development plan, when read as a whole. Material considerations, including the Framework do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Having considered all other matters raised I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Symmons

INSPECTOR