



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 August 2023

by K Ford MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D0515/W/23/3318565

Land East of Sand Bank Farm, Sandbank, Wisbech St Mary, PE13 4SE

- 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 and Mrs J Humphrey against the decision of Fenland District Council.
 - The application Ref F/YR22/0706/O, dated 17 May 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is erect up to 4 no dwellings (outline application with matters committed in respect of access).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the description of development as it appears on the Council's decision notice and the appeal form as it accurately summarises the development proposed.
3. The application is in outline with all matters reserved except access. An indicative layout plan has been submitted as part of the application. I have used this in the determination of the appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a grassed agricultural field that provides a notable gap between a line of residential properties and Sand Bank Farm. The site is adjacent to Sand Bank Farmhouse with sporadic development beyond. To the west is land subject to planning permission for a 2 storey residential dwelling which will stand next to a line of detached and semi detached dwellings heading into the settlement of Wisbech St Mary, identified as a Growth Village in Policy LP3 of the Fenland Local Plan (Local Plan). Land opposite the site and to the rear is open fields. The site fronts onto Sand Bank Road and is located within Flood Zone 3.
6. The scheme would lead to the development of up to 4 dwellings beyond the built up edge of the settlement, extending ribbon development into the countryside. The impact would be exacerbated by the absence of built development on the opposite side of the road which distinguishes the proposal

from the planning permission granted on neighbouring land. The scale of the development with up to 4 dwellings proposed also makes the scheme before me different from that which has been granted planning permission.

7. To comply with flood risk mitigation measures the finished floor levels would be required to be plus one metre above existing ground levels increasing the dominance of the development on the street scene. This is a relevant consideration in so far as the requirement is necessary to make the development of the site acceptable in principle.
8. Irrespective of the final design of the scheme, built development as proposed would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such it would conflict with Policy LP12 of the Local Plan which amongst other things supports development in rural villages where it would not harm the character of the surrounding countryside and farmland. It would also conflict with the part of Policy LP16 of the Local Plan that requires new development to make a positive contribution to local distinctiveness and the character of the area and not adversely impact on the street scene or settlement pattern of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

9. The development would provide up to 4 dwellings on the edge of a Growth Village. However, the benefits of this are outweighed by the harm identified. The development would also extend a footpath, improving pedestrian access into the village from the site. Nevertheless, it would largely be to mitigate the impact of the development which limits the weight I attach to it.
10. The appellant has indicated that the scheme would meet the aspirations of the Council's Planning Committee. There is little before me to substantiate this from my reading of the minutes of the Planning Committee meeting and the fact that the Council refused the planning application. I give little weight to this as a consequence.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons identified and taking into account all other matters, including representations from interested parties, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Ford

INSPECTOR