



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 November 2023

by Hannah Ellison BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/P2365/W/23/3319695

The Cottage, Hollin House Green, 1 Back Lane, Aughton, Lancashire L39 6SX

- 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 Philip Connor against the decision of West Lancashire Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2022/1047/FUL, dated 27 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 12 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is the change of use from existing domestic storage and workshop building to dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. Whether the appeal site represents a suitable location for a dwelling, having regard to local and national planning policies.

Reasons

3. This appeal concerns an existing outbuilding which is associated with an adjacent dwelling, sited at the end of a row of dwellings. The locality is predominantly characterised by open fields interspersed with limited residential properties.
4. The site lies outside of a settlement boundary, within the Green Belt, with the nearest shops and services, along with a railway station, located in Town Green. These facilities are a very substantial distance from the appeal site, with the appellant quoting walking times of between 28 and 35 minutes.
5. A round trip to access basic everyday services would therefore be extremely prolonged and this duration alone would likely deter future residents from walking or cycling to such facilities on a regular basis. It would be even more unlikely during inclement weather conditions.
6. I also observed that much of the highway in the locality of the appeal site lacks footways and street lighting. These conditions, along with the lengthy distances involved and the crossing of a dual carriageway which has a high-speed limit, would add to the very unappealing walk for future residents, including children and those who may be less able bodied. Given the highway conditions, cycling would also be an unattractive option.
7. I note that the settlement of Aughton comprises a restaurant and there is also a school and bus stops on Springfield Road. Whilst walking distances to these

facilities are less than that to the aforementioned services in Town Green, the journey to them still requires walking down stretches of highway which are unlit and lack continuous footways, and the crossing of the busy dual carriageway. Moreover, future residents would nevertheless still have to travel further afield for their everyday needs.

8. As such, the proposed change of use of the building to a separate dwelling would result in a residential property which has very poor accessibility to basic services. Future residents would therefore have a high dependency on a private motor vehicle.
9. The lack of evidence of pedestrian accidents in this locality, the ability to utilise food and pharmacy delivery services and the provision of an electric vehicle charging point fails to overcome these concerns.
10. Reference has been made to other appeal decisions in which it appears that the respective Inspectors considered the sites to have good levels of accessibility. However, each appeal has their own specific context and relationship to shops and services, which I am unable to comment on based on the extremely limited evidence before me. Thus, I am unable to determine whether the examples are directly comparable to this appeal.
11. Accordingly, the appeal site is not a suitable location for the proposed development due to its poor accessibility credentials and having regard to the spatial strategy of the development plan. Therefore, it conflicts with Policies GN1 and RS1 of the West Lancashire Local Plan 2012-2027 (October 2013) which together aim to direct new market housing to the most accessible locations, such as those within settlement boundaries.
12. For these reasons, the proposal would also conflict with paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework which seeks to promote sustainable development in rural areas by locating housing where it will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.

Conclusion

13. The proposed development would provide one additional dwelling which would make a contribution to local housing supply, create jobs during construction and generate economic benefits on subsequent occupation. It may also provide social benefits to the small residential community in this locality.
14. However, the extent of these benefits would be very limited due to the small scale of the proposal. Set against this is the conflict with relevant development plan policies and the Framework, which results in harm to which I afford substantial weight.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposed development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations of sufficient weight which indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

H Ellison
INSPECTOR