



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 January 2024

by Paul Cooper MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/B3438/W/23/3323803

Broadgate Hall, Cheadle Road, Winnothdale, Staffordshire ST10 4HU

- 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 JPRB Holdings Limited against the decision of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council.
 - The application Ref SMD/2023/0022, dated 16 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2023.
 - The development proposed is conversion of traditional barn along with contemporary extension to provide for high quality sustainable tourism.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue(s)

2. The main issues in this appeal are the tourism merits of the scheme as it relates to Planning Policy and the design context of the proposal.

Reasons

Tourism merits

3. The site is located between Upper Tean and Hollington, and is a former barn, part of a historic farmstead with a mixture of older and newer buildings. The proposal would see the conversion of the barn for tourism accommodation with the addition of an extension.
4. Located outside of any defined development boundary, the appeal site is within the open countryside where new development is limited for specific purposes. In conjunction with Policies SS10 and SS11 of the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan 2020 (The LP), Policy E4 supports new tourism development including visitor accommodation, subject to compliance with one of several criteria. These include that the proposal has good connectivity with other tourist destinations, particularly by public transport, walking or cycling; or is in a location close to settlements where local services, facilities and public transport are available.
5. Turning to the first criterion of Policy E4 of the LP, the site is not particularly well served by public transport. Visitors to the proposed holiday cabin would therefore predominantly arrive from outside the area by car. It cannot be assumed that future occupiers of the proposed cabin would not make long car

- journeys during their stays, the majority are likely to depend on their own private cars.
6. The appeal site would not be walkable to other tourist destinations. Whilst visitors may choose to visit the general countryside rather than specific tourist hubs, and therefore may choose to explore the local footpath network, this does not render the site accessible on foot.
 7. Given the distance to shops and services and the lack of suitable alternative forms of transport to the private car, the proposed development would not be in an accessible location. The proposal would not therefore comply with criterion 2 of Policy E4 of the LP.
 8. The occupants of the accommodation could be supplied by supermarket deliveries. However, the use of such a service could not be enforced and moreover, it would limit the contribution of visitor spends to the local economy.
 9. Overall, I find that the site would not have good connectivity with other tourist destinations and amenities, particularly by modes of transport other than the private car. Consequently, the proposal would not be a suitable location for tourism development. It would conflict with Policies E4, SS10 and SS11 of the LP which amongst other things, seek to ensure that new visitor proposals are in sustainable locations enabling good accessibility to services and tourist resources. Conflict is also found with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks insofar as it relates to sustainability, rural tourism development that respects the character of the countryside.

Design Context

10. I appreciate that the proposed extension would seek to replicate the linear form and low profile of the existing building and that it would be of a simple, contemporary design. Nonetheless, the proposal would clearly read as a non-agricultural addition, given the general domestication of the site which would occur. The proposed landscaping would further formalise this part of the site. This incongruous presence of domestic built form would be readily apparent from public vantage points due to the setting of the site.
11. By virtue of these factors, the proposal would be a prominent and obtrusive addition which would not assimilate well into the open, rural landscape in which it sits and would fail to respect the identity of the former farmstead.
12. Whilst I acknowledge that the appeal building is not in great order, it is not out of keeping with its countryside location as it largely appears utilitarian and is a nod to the appeal sites former agricultural use. It does not therefore significantly detract from the locality, unlike the converted, extended, domesticated appeal proposal, were it to be approved.
13. The appeal site would provide new tourism facilities, and I note the options available from the evidence provided by the appellant, but I also notice the distance to these. However, compliance with Policy E4 of the LP is also subject to the proposal being of an appropriate quality, scale and character which is compatible with the local area and enhances the heritage and landscape of the area. It remains that the design of the appeal proposal would result in harm as identified.

14. Taking all the above into consideration, the proposal would result in harm to the landscape, design and context values of the area. It therefore fails to accord with Policies E4, SS10, SS11, DC1 and DC2 of the LP, along with the Framework. Collectively, whilst these policies and guidance provide support for tourism development, they aim to ensure that it is sensitive to its landscape and setting.

Conclusion

15. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

Paul Cooper

INSPECTOR