



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2024

by H Wilkinson BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A2470/W/23/3332608

Land to the north of Greetham Wood, Stretton Road, Greetham, Rutland LE15 7SB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Paul Hinch against the decision of Rutland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 2023/0168/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of agricultural grain/fodder storage building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Whilst the applicant named on the planning application form differs to the appellant, based on the explanation provided, I am satisfied that the appeal is being pursued by the original applicant.
3. Amended plans were received by the Council prior to the determination of the planning application. The Council considered the proposal based on these amended plans and in determining the appeal, I shall do the same.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site occupies a prominent location adjacent to the main road and comprises part of an open, agricultural field which is devoid of built form and remote from the main farm complex. The immediate area is that of a rural landscape comprising of open fields separated by hedgerows and areas of woodland, interspersed with sporadic development including established farm buildings. Whilst I have no evidence to suggest that the appeal site is subject to any landscape designation, its undeveloped nature positively contributes to the character of this part of the countryside.
6. The proposal would result in the introduction of built development on a rural site where there is currently none. The building would be of standard agricultural construction, in keeping with the rural setting and would be positioned close to a well-established, relatively high hedge forming the site boundary with the road. This existing screening would filter and mitigate some views of the proposal from the main road and the wider area, particularly during the summer months.

7. However, the building would exceed the height of this existing planting by a considerable margin and a large proportion of the top part of the building would still be visible. Consequently, in views from the wider countryside and the main road, the building, by virtue of its cumulative scale, massing and height would be perceived as a conspicuously tall and unduly prominent standalone addition to the landscape which would erode the contribution that the site makes to the character of this part of the countryside. Whilst additional landscaping could be implemented, it would not adequately mitigate the harm resulting from the overall scale of the proposal.
8. In coming to this view, I recognise that the height of the building is somewhat dictated by its intended use, operational requirements, and the need to ensure that the unit is watertight. Nevertheless, it would result in an excessively large, unsympathetic addition to the landscape and the evidence does not persuade me that the proposal would be justified on this basis. Further, the details provided in respect of the Cottesmore Lodge Farm scheme indicate that the overall ridge height of the building was some 1.6m lower than the appeal proposal. It also appeared to be grouped with existing buildings. The scale and context is therefore materially different to the scheme before me.
9. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area contrary to Policies SP7, SP13, SP15 and SP23 of the Site Allocation and Policies Development Plan Document 2014. Collectively, and amongst other aspects, these policies seek to ensure that development in the countryside is not unduly prominent and is sensitive to its setting. It would also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework where it seeks to safeguard the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Other Matters

10. Consistent with national policy, the Rutland Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2011 is encouraging of development which supports the rural economy, and it is noted that the Council does not dispute the principle of development. However, the policy presumption in favour of such development is given on the proviso that proposals, amongst other aspects positively contribute towards the character and distinctiveness of the countryside. This is not the case here.
11. An adequate means of access would be provided, and the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the highway network. Further, the proposal would not adversely affect the living conditions of nearby residents. However, these are neutral factors and do not weigh in favour of the proposal.
12. Whilst it may be the case that the Council raised no objection to the height of the building as originally submitted, I have limited my considerations to the plans before me.

Conclusion

13. Accordingly, the appeal proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

H Wilkinson

INSPECTOR