



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 April 2024

by Nick Bowden BA(Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/A2470/W/23/3332952

Land south of Barrowden Road, Ketton, Rutland (Grid Ref 497958/303265)

- 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 Charles Haynes on behalf of The Bowmen of Rutland Archery Club Committee against the decision of Rutland County Council.
 - The application Ref is 2023/0855/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the Change of use from agriculture to a sports field (Archery) under Class F2 Local Community F2(c) Outdoor Sport. Erection of 2 No. Steel Shipping Containers, Prefabricated Steel Container Toilet Block and Wooden Clubhouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site address was not provided on the application form. I have therefore used the one given by the Council on the decision notice, in addition to the grid reference which was provided. Furthermore, the description of development on the application form was extensive and contained elements which are not development. I have therefore used the same description of development as the Council in the interests of clarity. The appellant has been consulted on both these matters.
3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised in December 2023. As the changes do not materially affect the main issues in this case, the parties have not been invited to make further comments. Where reference is made to the Framework in this decision, the paragraph numbers are those that appear in the latest version.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - a) the effect of the proposed development on highway safety having regard to the nature of surrounding roads, access to the site and parking; and
 - b) whether the proposed development would be in an accessible location.

Reasons

5. The site is in an open part of a field which is abutted on one side by a hedgerow which divides the site from Barrowden Road. It is located broadly to the south of the village of Ketton along a single track road which runs between this village before meeting the A47 to the west of Duddington. This single track

road is narrow for its entire length with only occasional places for vehicles to pass each other. Some of these passing places appear to be informal, making use of field accesses or the like.

Highway safety

6. The Rutland Local Plan Site Allocations and Policies Development Plan Document 2014 (RLP) policy SP15 relates to design and amenity and specifies that development should not have an unacceptable adverse impact on the highway network. This policy further notes that, where necessary, mitigation measures will be required to ensure that any impact is kept within acceptable limits.
7. I am mindful of the small number of visitors who attend the current site and, as a County-wide facility, that it would be catering to attendees from a wide area. Moreover, these attendees may well be encumbered with bows and arrows which would be neither practical nor desirable to carry on public transport. According to the club's historical records for September 2022 to August 2023; the number of attendees was a maximum of 252 people per month, equating to a maximum average of 8.3 people per day in August of that year. The maximum on any single day was 28 and this figure remains an outlier. On these peak days, some attendees may be arriving by minibus. This overall low number of visitors and vehicle movements leads me to conclude that highway safety on local roads would not be significantly impaired due to the additional traffic.
8. However, the site, as defined by the red edge indicated on the plans, details no access with the highway. The appellant states that the access serving the adjacent vineyard would be used. Although the Council raise no objection to the use of that access in principle, it is beyond the application site, its use would be reliant on the co-operation of a third party and no details of it are provided on the plans. In addition, although a parking area is shown on the plans, no details of its layout or the means of access to it are provided. Consequently, the means of access to the highway and for the parking of vehicles is unclear.
9. The lack of certainty about the access to the site and the parking means that it is not possible to make a considered assessment as to what these arrangements would be. If the access and the parking were not satisfactory vehicles may end up parking along the narrow Barrowden Road, or on highway verges, or utilising an unsafe access to the site. This lack of clarity on this fundamental matter means that the submission of further details could not be secured through the use of planning conditions. Therefore, in the absence of sufficient detail and clarity relating to site access and parking arrangements, the proposed development could be harmful to highway safety and I cannot conclude it would accord with RLP policy SP15 as set out above.

Accessibility of location

10. Policy SP7 of the RLP provides for non-residential development in the countryside and sets out that sustainable development will be supported where it is essential for the provision of sport, recreation and visitor's facilities for which the countryside is the only appropriate location. This is subject to, amongst other things, the development being in an accessible location and not generating an unacceptable increase in the amount of traffic movements

including car travel. In this case, the nature of the use is one that is low impact in terms of noise and disturbance, would have minimal lasting effect on the ground and is typically of a rural nature and ideally suited to a level field, as is proposed here.

11. The site is in a relatively remote location with the closest settlement being the village of Ketton. I have not been provided with details of any public transport infrastructure that serves this village, but it is apparent that even if this village is well served by such means, the site is still quite some distance away. Moreover, there is no footway along the entire length of Barrowden Road, including within Ketton itself. It is therefore apparent that there would be a distinct reliance on the use of the private motor car to access the site.
12. The development cannot be regarded as being in a particularly accessible location and, in this regard, it conflicts with policy SP7 of the RLP.

Other Matters

13. Paragraph 102 of the Framework identifies that access to a network of high-quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Considering this, I have noted the letters in support of the application, including representations from Archery GB. These highlight the positive benefits of the sport to archers from all backgrounds, ethnicities and beliefs, young and old, able-bodied and disabled.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

14. Although development would have low levels of traffic generation, due to a lack of clarity on access and parking arrangements, it does not comply with RLP policy SP15 and I assign this conflict significant weight due to public safety concerns. The site is not in a readily accessible location and would therefore also conflict with policy SP7. In this case, the benefits to outdoor sport and recreation are persuasive and I assign these substantial weight. These benefits do not, however, outweigh the overall harm to highway safety and the conflict with RLP policies SP7 and SP15.
15. Therefore, the proposal conflicts with the development plan, read as a whole, and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For these reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Nick Bowden

INSPECTOR