



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 May 2024

by K L Robbie BA (Hons) DipTP MTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/W/23/3325519

Land at Broadgate Lane, Gt Moulton NR15 2HX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Green Label Poultry against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application reference is 2022/2349.
 - The development proposed is 2 no. dwellings (all matters reserved).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application has been submitted in outline form with all matters reserved for subsequent consideration. A drawing has been submitted that includes details of layout and access. However, as all matters are reserved for future consideration, I have treated it as illustrative, and I have determined the appeal on this basis.
3. The Government published a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in December 2023. This does not materially change the planning policy context in respect of the main issues, and I have determined the appeal accordingly. For the avoidance of doubt, I shall refer to section and paragraph numbers in the updated Framework where necessary.
4. The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) was adopted by the Council in March 2024. This supersedes the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2014 (JCS). The relevant policies in the GNLP are Policies 1 - 3 and 7.5 which replace Policies 1 - 6, and 17 of the JCS. The main parties have been given the opportunity to comment on the policy changes in relation to the appeal and I am satisfied that no party has been unfairly prejudiced as a result. I make no further reference to the JCS.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - Whether the appeal site is a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to local and national policies and access to services and facilities; and
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Locational Suitability

6. Policies 1 and 7 of the NGLP and Policy DM1.3 of the South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document 2015 (SNLP) together set out the Council's spatial strategy. SNLP Policy DM1.3 directs new development to land within development boundaries, except where the development is of a type supported by the development plan or where the proposal demonstrates overriding benefits. These policies are intended to ensure housing is located in areas which are accessible and sustainable.
7. The appeal site is located on Broadgate Lane outside the defined settlement boundary of Great Moulton in open countryside, separated from dwellings at Sneath Common by fields and railway line. It is formed of a grassed paddock adjacent to New House Farm within one of several small clusters of dwellings and farm buildings along the lane.
8. The appeal site is located some distance from the edge of the Great Moulton along an unlit single-track lane with no footway. Great Moulton contains few facilities. A village hall and primary school are located at Aslacton around 30 minutes' walk away. It is therefore highly likely that most day-to-day needs of future occupiers would be located elsewhere.
9. Bus stops are located some distance away on Woodrow Lane. Therefore, to access services and bus stops in the village occupiers of the proposed dwellings would need to walk or cycle for some distance. I have not been provided with information as to the regularity of any of the services from the bus stops. In the absence of detailed information about the frequency and destinations of bus services from the bus stops I cannot conclude that anything other than significant car dependency is likely to access shops and services further afield.
10. I acknowledge that walking along the lane would be a matter of personal choice. However, the site is less than ideally located in terms of access to services, facilities and amenities, and in reality, occupiers are highly likely to prefer the convenience of the private car. As a result, the environmental and social impacts arising from the proposal would be a negative rather than positive benefits.
11. The Framework acknowledges that where there are groups of smaller settlements, development in one, may support services in a village nearby. However, in the instance before me, the proposal is not within a settlement, this would not be the case. I also accept that the appeal site would not be isolated in the in the *Braintree*¹ sense of the definition but it is not, for the reasons set out, located appropriately in relation to proximity to services and facilities. Consequently, is not appropriate for its location.
12. For these reasons, I conclude that the appeal site is not a suitable location for the development proposed, having had regard to the development plan and national planning policy. The principle of the proposed development would be unacceptable and would conflict with SNLP Policy DM1.3 and Policies 2 and 3 of the GNLP which together seek to ensure that development is located in

¹ Braintree DC v SSCLG, Greyread Ltd & Granville Development Ltd [2017] EWHC 2743 (Admin) [2018] EWCA Civ 610.

sustainable locations. The proposal would also fail to comply with the aims of the Framework in this respect.

Character and Appearance

13. The proposed dwellings would be located in an area which is sparsely settled, with dispersed farms and has a strong sense of openness. The area has an overriding rural character. Dwellings are located in small clusters sporadically along the lane and vary in style and character. The appeal site is currently in use as a grassed paddock and is separated from the highway by a post and wire fence, as such it maintains an open appearance which contributes positively the landscape character of the area.
14. The proposal would be viewed within the context of a small group of three dwellings where currently two small bungalows are set back from the highway facing farm buildings and a larger detached house faces the lane. It would infill a gap between farm buildings and New House Farm consolidating the cluster of dwellings and buildings. Consequently, the proposal would fail to respect the sparsely settled character of the lane diminishing the sense of spaciousness along it. Whilst the paddock may not be viable for agricultural production, its use as a grazing paddock is appropriate to its rural location.
15. I acknowledge that landscaping is a matter reserved for future consideration. However, the harm to the prevailing landscape character that I have found would be unlikely to be overcome by the provision of landscaping as part of a detailed proposal for the site.
16. For the reasons above, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area in conflict with SNLP Policies DM1.4 and DM4.5 and Policies 1, 2 and 7 of GNLP which together seek to ensure that development is of a high quality appropriate to its landscape character.

Other Matters

17. My attention has been drawn to an appeal decision² at Poringland where an Inspector came to an alternative conclusion. From information before me the decision was made under a previous planning policy regime. Furthermore, the proposal was for a greater scale of development and therefore not directly comparable to the proposal before me. I have therefore placed limited weight on this decision and it does not persuade me to come to an alternative conclusion on the main issues above.
18. The Council did not refuse the application in respect of highway safety, ecology or flooding, and did not raise any design issues or residential amenity issues. However, the application was made in outline with all matters reserved and were not matters for consideration. Nevertheless, the lack of harm identified are neutral factors which neither weigh in favour nor against the proposal and do not outweigh the harm that I have found on the main issues.
19. The appellant states that the dwellings would be built utilising modern methods of construction and alternative sources of energy and heating would be fitted. However, I have little information about what these would be. Their use in any event would not outweigh the harm that I have found.

² APP/L2630/W/22/3296988 Land North of Heath Loke, Poringland, Norwich NR14 7JU

Planning Balance and Conclusion

20. The proposal would provide an additional 2 units of accommodation. This would amount to a small contribution to housing supply locally where since the publication of the GNLP the Council can now demonstrate a five-year housing land supply of 5.75 years. There would be some economic benefit from occupiers of the dwellings supporting facilities and services in the area and there would also be some economic benefit from construction employment, it would be short-lived. Overall, I attribute limited weight to these benefits.
21. I have found that there would be conflict with the spatial strategy for the area and there would harm would be the character and appearance of the area. These are matters to which I ascribe significant adverse weight in the planning balance.
22. Therefore, for the reason set out, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate the decision should be taken otherwise. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

K L Robbie

INSPECTOR