



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2024

by K Williams MTCP (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D2510/W/23/3330628

**Misty Meadow Holiday Park, Hanby Lane, Welton le Marsh, Lincolnshire
PE23 5TH**

- 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 David Hewison AE Hewison Limited against the decision of East Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref is N/199/01327/23.
 - The development proposed is for the change of use of land for the siting of 18 no. static caravans (increase of 6 from that approved under N/199/02050/18), minor alterations to the pond and internal road, provision of bin storage area, erection of pumphouse and water storage tank and CCTV columns (works already started).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by A E Hewison Limited against East Lindsey District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues is whether the scale of the development is appropriate, having regard to the Council's spatial strategy for tourism development and the character of the area.

Reasons

Scale of development

4. The appeal site comprises a small scale caravan site, with permission for twelve static caravans. It is located on the edge of Welton Le Marsh, and close to the boundary of the Lincolnshire Wolds National Landscape (formerly the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).
5. Policy SP1 of the East Lindsay Local Plan Core Strategy (the CS) adopted July 2018, categorises Welton Le Marsh as a small village. There are limited facilities available. The Council has identified that there is a public house and community hall, and limited public transport options. To my mind this fully reflects the character of a smaller settlement outlined in SP1 of the CS.
6. Although Policy SP15 of the CS offers support for tourism development. The supporting context requires that regard should be given to the character of the existing settlement in the scale and cumulative impact in visual and traffic

terms as well as the impact on the host community in which it is located. To that end, the Council has also identified towns, large and medium villages as the locations best able to ensure access to services and facilities. This is reflected in Criterion 3) of Policy SP15. I find this broadly consistent with the requirement within Paragraph 88 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to enable sustainable rural tourism which respects the character of the countryside.

7. It has been put to me that the development is not an extension and Criterion 3) of Policy SP15 would not apply. In my view, although the term *extensions* to caravan site development is not precisely defined in Policy SP15, given the aims of the policy to manage cumulative impacts the proposal would amount to an extension given that it enlarges the capacity of the existing caravan park by increasing the number of caravans, even though it is within the existing site. The Council's officer report¹ for the extension of the site to 12 caravans also refers to criterion 3) being applicable. That the Council previously found an increase in the site to be acceptable, it does not follow that further expansion of this site would therefore be acceptable.
8. Even if I were to accept that the development was not an extension Criterion 1) of Policy SP15 the CS sets out support for tourism facilities where they are of a scale and intensity compatible with their surroundings. Notwithstanding that an existing business is already in operation, the additional caravans would increase the overall number of units by a further 50%. The total provision of 18 units would result in a site of larger scale than currently exists at odds with the overall small and dispersed scale and character of the village. I considered that this is a substantial relative increase in the number of units at this site.
9. I am not of the view that the proposals would be any more visually intrusive given their siting close to existing caravans and as a result of the surrounding topography, existing screening and proposed landscaping. I also do not consider that footfall arising as a consequence of the development would be harmful. However, having identified that there are limited services and facilities within Welton Le Marsh, I have also not been provided with any evidence regarding the distance to services and facilities in nearby settlements. There is no evidence that cycling and walking for visitors wishing to access services, shops and facilities would be a realistic option. The proposal would create additional vehicular comings and goings as visitors would have to travel further afield to access day to day services, shops and facilities, none of which are available at the site.
10. Whilst I do appreciate that the increase equates to six caravans, it has not been articulated what the number of cars or visitors to the site would be. Given that I have found the cumulative increase in the size of the site would be significant in this context I am of the view that the inevitable vehicular comings and goings, would not be capable of being as easily integrated and would have an urbanising effect on the small village negatively affecting the rural setting and that of the National Landscape of Lincolnshire Wolds.
11. I therefore conclude that the scale of the development is not appropriate, having regard to the Council's spatial strategy for tourism development and the character of the area. Furthermore it would harmfully undermine the plan-led approach to ensure that there is access to services and facilities for visitors.

¹ Council Reference: N/199/02050/18

Accordingly it would be contrary to Policy SP15 of the CS, which seeks, amongst other things to locate new tourism proposals in close proximity to those settlements which can support their needs.

Other Matters

12. The proposal would undoubtedly make a contribution to the local economy through the spending from visitors, supporting local facilities such as the village public house. However I have no substantive evidence that the scheme would be needed to specifically support tourism provision in the area, the business or conversely that refusing the scheme would have a negative economic impact. Although the development will accommodate planting and it has been put to me that biodiversity levels would be increased, the preliminary ecological appraisal before me states it is not known if these measures would secure a biodiversity net gain without a full biodiversity assessment being completed using the Defra Biodiversity Metric and no Biodiversity Metric has been provided. As such other material considerations do not indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above and having regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Williams

INSPECTOR