



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 April 2024

by S Pearce BA(Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th August 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N2535/W/23/3330567

**The Guardroom, Hemswell Antiques Centres, Caenby Corner Estate,
Hemswell Cliff, Gainsborough DN21 5TX**

- 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 R Miller of Hemswell Antiques Centres against the decision of West Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref is 146089.
 - The development proposed is described as a “proposed two storey extension to the Guardroom building”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the determination of this application, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 19 December 2023 and updated on 20 December 2023. Those parts of the Framework most relevant to this appeal have not been amended.
3. In addition, on 30 July 2024 the Government published a consultation on proposed reforms to the Framework and a written ministerial statement. While these proposed changes can only be given limited weight at this stage, the development does not propose the provision of housing and, while amendments are proposed to, among other things, section 12 of the Framework, the overall emphasis remains on providing well-designed places.
4. As a result, I consider that there is no requirement for me to seek further submissions in respect of these matters, and I am satisfied that no party’s interests would be prejudiced by my taking this approach.
5. The planning application was refused by the Council with reference to policies in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan Adopted 24 April 2017. The Council subsequently adopted a new Central Lincolnshire Local Plan in April 2023 (LP) which resulted in the former Local Plan policies being superseded. In addition, the Hemswell Cliff Neighbourhood Plan 2023 (NP) has also since been adopted. I have determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the host building and character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. The appeal site lies within a former RAF base and comprises a large, two storey, detached building (the appeal building), occupied by Hemswell Antiques Centre, sited in a relatively large plot. The appeal building is located at the entrance to the former RAF base and is a prominent building within the area. Although the appeal building has been previously extended, its original and unique form is still evident. With the exception of the nearby residential properties, this area is predominately characterised by large buildings, sited in spacious, verdant grounds, which the appeal building, by reason of its size, design, orientation and associated grounds, contributes towards.
8. The proposed development seeks to increase the size of the appeal building, through the creation of a large two storey side extension, with a front single storey section. The appeal scheme would provide additional floorspace, including sales area, photography area and café extension. Irrespective of whether the appeal scheme is almost the same size as the host building or not, these works would significantly increase the scale and bulk of the appeal building.
9. The appeal scheme would be located on the side elevation of the host building closest to the entrance of the former RAF base. This is the most prominent elevation of the appeal building when approaching the appeal site from the A631. Although the proposed extension would have a relatively narrow width, it would have a substantial depth. Due to its proposed siting and orientation, it would be the widest section of the proposed extension that would be most visible.
10. In addition, while it was not considered practicable to adopt and extend the existing hipped roof across the proposed extension, the appellant highlights that the overall height of the appeal scheme would be lower than the host building. However, while noting this, the proposed extension would be higher than the eaves of the host building. Therefore, having regard to its height and depth, the appeal scheme would not appear subservient to the host building and would result in an overly dominant addition.
11. Moreover, the layout and size of the appeal scheme would erode the unique design and original form of the host building. This would be most evident on the approach to the former RAF base and from wider views, including from the A631.
12. Therefore, by reason of its height, depth, orientation and siting, the appeal scheme would result in a dominant, incongruous and visually prominent form of development, that would be at odds with, and detrimental to, the host building and prevailing character of the area.
13. The appellant states that they are committed to making a positive contribution towards the district's economy and highlights that the Hemswell Antiques Centre is the largest antiques centre in Europe. Moreover, they assert that the amount of floorspace proposed is necessary to meet the demands and accommodate the success of the business, including addressing the future needs of the local business, without necessitating a need to move or purchase alternative facilities.

14. While these matters are noted, since the appeal was submitted, the Council have granted planning permission¹ for an extension to the appeal building (the approved scheme). The evidence submitted shows that the approved scheme is of a comparable size to the appeal scheme and located in a less visually prominent area of the appeal site. Therefore, the approved scheme demonstrates that the needs of the business could be met by a less harmful scheme. Therefore, these matters carry limited weight.
15. While the appellant contends the appeal scheme would screen views of existing commercial buildings from the nearby residential properties, nevertheless, it would harm the host building and character and appearance of the area.
16. The appellant has highlighted that the Council has raised no issues in respect of the principle of the development, its design or proposed materials and, subject to conditions where necessary, the appeal scheme raises no issues in respect of minerals safeguarding, flood risk and drainage, biodiversity net gain, land contamination, highways, energy efficiency and living conditions. An absence of harm or compliance in respect of these matters carries neutral weight which weighs neither for nor against the proposed development.
17. For these reasons, the proposed development would result in unacceptable harm to the host building and the character and appearance of the area, contrary to LP Policies S33 and S53 and NP Policy 2. Collectively, these seek, among other things, to ensure development proposals do not have a significant adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, are visually attractive and sympathetic to Hemswell Cliff's character.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Consequently, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

S Pearce

INSPECTOR

¹ Planning application reference 147708