



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025

by **L Gardner MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2003/W/24/3357013

Carrhouse Cottage, Carrhouse Road, Carrhouse, Belton, North Lincolnshire DN9 1PG

- 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 Paul Christie against the decision of North Lincolnshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PA/2023/1376.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing former workers cottages and construction of two detached dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. During the appeal proceedings the appellant has provided a set of revised plans and drawings offering an alternative to the appeal proposal for semi-detached dwellings. In this case, the revisions would represent a substantial difference to the proposal, no longer in line with the proposed description of development, which specifically references detached dwellings. The appeal must be determined based on the plans as originally submitted to the Council and upon which it based its decision, and which have been subject to consultation. To do otherwise would prejudice the interests of the Council, interested third parties and consultees, who have not been consulted on the revised scheme and who may have observations to make. I have therefore proceeded to determine the appeal based on the plans as originally submitted.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the site represents an appropriate location for housing, having regard to the spatial strategy and accessibility; and
 - the effect on the character and appearance of the open countryside and the historic landscape of the Isle of Axholme.

Reasons

Location – Spatial strategy

4. Policies CS1 and CS2 of the North Lincolnshire Core Strategy (NLCS) (2011) set the spatial strategy for the District, with a sequential approach to development. For rural settlements, Policy CS2 of the NLCS seeks to confine development within the defined limits and restrict development in the open countryside. Policy RD2 of the

North Lincolnshire Local Plan (NLLP) (2003) states that development in the open countryside will be strictly controlled, with certain exceptions outlined. One of these relates to the replacement of existing dwellings which is further facilitated by Policy RD10 of the NLLP, this sets an expectation that volume increases for replacement dwellings should not be more than 20% compared to the original.

5. The appeal site is between the settlements of Carrhouse and Westgate but sits distinctly outside of either, being surrounded by fields, which emphasises its rural location. The development proposes the construction of two detached dwellings, following the demolition of an existing dwelling. Nevertheless, the replacement dwelling would go beyond the limits permissible through Policies RD2 and RD10 of the NLLP and the development as a whole, would lead to an additional dwelling in the open countryside.

Accessibility

6. Policy RD2 of the NLLP requires consideration of whether sites are capable of being served by public transport. In this location outside of any defined development limit, in order to access facilities for day to day needs, the occupiers would be reliant on a narrow, rural road. Between the site and the edge of Carrhouse the road has no footpaths or street lights. Whilst there is one streetlight close to the site in the direction of Westgate, it still does not serve a footpath which would facilitate a safe walking route. I observed during my site visit that the road has a national speed limit making its use as a walking, or even cycling, route even less attractive.
7. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is clear that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and that this should be taken into account in decision making. However, in this case I do not consider that there are sufficient realistic alternatives to the use of a private vehicle for the journeys that future occupiers of the development are likely to need to make.

Conclusion

8. When judged against Policies CS1 and CS2 of the NLCS and Policies RD2 and RD10 of the NLLP, the proposal would not be an appropriate location for housing, having regard to the spatial strategy and accessibility. Permitting it would be harmful to and would undermine the strategy set within the NLCS for the distribution of housing.

Character and appearance

9. The site is within the Area of Special Historic Landscape Interest (ASHLI) of the Isle of Axholme, designated for its unique historic landscape retaining the pattern of ancient open strip fields and enclosures surrounding the villages on the Isle. Policy LC14 of the NLLP refers specifically to the ASHLI and states that the overall settlement pattern of the area, amongst other characteristics, contributes to the distinctiveness of this countryside landscape.
10. The appeal site accommodates an existing dwelling, Carrhouse Cottage, set back from the highway edge, broadly centrally within the plot. Despite the fencing which defines the site boundary, the positioning of the dwelling, away from the site boundaries, gives it a degree of spaciousness which corresponds to its rural setting. The Council have identified the dwelling as a non-designated heritage

asset (NDHA) for its historic interest, understood to previously have been two semi-detached cottages. The presence of the cottage, as a traditional farm cottage at the edge of the open fields, assists in the legibility of the site as part of an agricultural landscape. The significance of the NDHA, and its positive contribution to the historic, agricultural landscape and its setting, would be lost through the total demolition of the cottage as proposed.

11. The proposed dwellings would occupy almost the entire width of the appeal site. Whilst they would not encroach beyond the existing extent of the residential garden, and they would maintain an open frontage, their relationship with the other boundaries would be notably different, eroding the existing spaciousness of the plot. The lack of space around the buildings would remove what is presently an important buffer between the dwelling and the open strip fields, created by the existing driveway and garden areas. The development would therefore have an urbanising effect to the character and appearance of the area which would be unsympathetic to its rural, historic context.
12. The appellant seeks to justify the proposal stating that it represents a return to its former status of two dwellings. There are no details before me confirming the scale of the previous dwellings, albeit it is suggested that the existing dwelling is an amalgamation of the previous pair of cottages. This information is fundamental in the context of assessment against Policy RD10 of the NLLP. Without such details, I attach little weight to the previous form of the appeal site as two dwellings.
13. For the reasons indicated, the proposal would materially harm the character and appearance of the open countryside and the historic landscape of the Isle of Axholme and would conflict with Policies CS1 and CS2 of the NLCS, and Policies RD2, RD10, LC7, LC14, and DS1 of the NLLP. These collectively seek to ensure that development does not destroy, damage or adversely affect the character, appearance or setting of the historic landscape, and more generally ensure that development enhances the local character and distinctiveness of the area.

Other Matters

14. Reference is made in the appellant's statement to a housing development to the north of the appeal site, suggesting that this demonstrates a precedence for residential development within the designated strip farming area. Full details of this development have not been provided, albeit it appears to relate to a scheme for 23 dwellings. Based on the information provided, I do not know the material considerations considered as part of that application, albeit it clearly related to a significantly different scale of development which would likely have had different considerations to the development proposed. I am therefore unable to draw any direct comparisons with the appeal scheme before me.
15. It is suggested that Carrhouse Cottage represents a poor standard of living accommodation, and that the proposal would upgrade the housing stock in the area. It has not been evidenced that there are no alternative means of bringing the dwelling back to a satisfactory standard of living, such as through extension to the existing dwelling, and therefore I have attached little weight to this matter.
16. There would be some modest economic and social benefits associated with the provision of two dwellings, albeit only one net additional. One additional dwelling

would not make a significant contribution to the housing land supply of the Council. However, I still attach these benefits moderate weight in my overall decision.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

17. The proposal would not be an appropriate location for housing, having regard to the spatial strategy. Paragraph 216 of the Framework requires a balanced judgement in weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect NDHAs. In this case, the proposal would have a direct harmful impact on the NDHA through total demolition. In addition, the proposal would materially harm the character and appearance of the open countryside and the historic landscape of the Isle of Axholme.
18. The benefits of the proposal, including a modest housing delivery are not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified. This brings the scheme into conflict with the development plan and material considerations do not indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

L Gardner

INSPECTOR