



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 March 2025

by **C Walker BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1st April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/24/3357411

Clingo Nursery, South Fen Road, Bourne, Lincolnshire PE10 0DL

- 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 R & T Clingo of Clingo Plants against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref is S24/1182.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing site buildings and residential re-development.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal scheme relates to an outline proposal, with all matters, other than the means of access, reserved for future consideration. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis.
3. A plan has been submitted as part of the appeal which indicates how residential development could be accommodated on the site. This is clearly marked as 'illustrative' and I have taken this into account for those purposes only.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a horticultural nursery located on the south side of South Fen Road, Bourne, towards the eastern fringe of the settlement. The site frontage lies between the pair of dwellings that form 2 and 4 South Fen Lane and No. 6 which is land within the same control as the appeal site. A culverted vehicular access leads to a car parking area, informally laid out and surfaced with compacted stone. The site widens at the rear of No. 6, extending south to accommodate a large number of low-lying glasshouses and service buildings associated with the nursery. Site boundaries are formed in the main by palisade fencing and hedgerows.
6. Along the southern side of South Fen Road, the immediate area comprises a linear residential belt of development fronting the road. Beyond this grouping of residential properties to the east, is a large-scale industrial and employment complex that extends further back from South Fen Road. A waste transfer site is

located to the south-east, also set back from the highway. On the opposite site of the road is open countryside and allotment gardens.

7. This site could potentially accommodate many dwellings, depending on their size, scale and layout. I note that the application form suggests that the scheme is for 8 market dwellings and this number is reflected on the illustrative drawing. However, it could exceed 8 given the quantum of residential units is not specified within the description of development. In any event, the appeal before me relates to the site edged in red and equates to around 0.58 hectares. Therefore, I have considered the scheme on the basis that residential development is sought on the whole site area.
8. Policy SP2 of the South Kesteven District Council Local Plan 2011-2036 (2020) (SKLP) sets out a settlement hierarchy for the district. It provides that development which maintains and supports the market towns, including Bourne, will be permitted provided that it does not compromise their nature and character. Policy SP3 of the SKLP supports infill development within defined settlements, subject to specified criteria. These include that development should be within a substantially built up frontage, or, be a re-development opportunity (previously development land).
9. Not all of the site would be within a substantially built up frontage. Residential development in depth, away from the site frontage would be at odds with the pattern of development along the road. Despite the fact that appearance, layout, scale and landscaping are reserved for future consideration, development of a residential nature beyond the rear of the residential curtilage of No. 6, would introduce a far more intensive, densely developed form of development than its surroundings.
10. Notwithstanding the employment uses further to the east, developing this site, would unduly urbanise land towards the fringe of this settlement, where the loose knit ribbon of residential development currently helps manage the transition from the rural outskirts into the town. The introduction of a cul-de-sac style development which the development would inevitably comprise, would be in stark contrast with the existing predominantly linear pattern of development and would have a significant adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the two additional access points proposed so close to those already in existence would also be unduly urbanising and would erode the semi-rural character and appearance of this part of South Fen Road.
11. The site does not constitute previously developed land (PDL) owing to its horticultural use. However, it could still represent an appropriate development opportunity, if the appeal proposal were to meet the remaining criterion of Policy SP3. Whilst the proposed development would not extend the pattern of development beyond the existing built form, neither would it be in keeping with the character of the area as is required by criterion (d) of the policy.
12. Acknowledging that scale is not before me, the illustrative plan suggests that the development could be far more intensive in terms of bulk and massing than the modest height structures already in situ. This would significantly contrast with the low-lying horticultural development currently on the site, which would compromise the nature and character of the area. Even restricting the development to single

storey dwellings and with mitigating landscaping, it would not negate the concerns I have with regards to the effects on the character and appearance of the area.

13. The appellant makes the case that Policy SP2 is the most relevant policy in determining this appeal and that it need not satisfy Policy SP3. I have not been made aware of any defined settlement boundary for Bourne. In any case, I agree with the appellant that whether the site is within the built-up area, or an edge of settlement extension is not especially relevant. In either scenario, the appeal would still fail as I have found that the development on the site would compromise its nature and character, in conflict Policy SP2. Those findings were not the same in the appeal decision cited within Enclosure 8¹ of the appellant's statement.
14. The significant harm I have identified would bring the development into conflict with Policies of SP2 and SP3 as I have set out. For the same reasons, there would also be conflict with Policies DE1 and SD1 of the SKLP. These policies amongst other things, require developments to make a positive contribution to the character of the area, reinforce local identity and expect that proposals do not have an adverse impact on the street-scene, settlement pattern or the landscape/townscape character of the surrounding area. Neither would it proactively enhance the districts character as required by Policy SD1 of the SKLP.

Other Matters

15. The examples cited in support of redevelopment opportunities in circumstances where land is not PDL are noted. All three cases² have a differing context to the appeal before me, not least because no conflict with identified with criterion (d) of Policy SP3, which is the case with the appeal before me. It follows that they do not alter my findings on this appeal.
16. My attention is also drawn to an appeal decision letter³ (DL) relating to land behind two frontage dwellings on adjoining land. There are some clear differences between the schemes, and I acknowledge the appeal site coverage with hardstanding and buildings. However, the structures on this appeal site are low-lying, lightweight structures that are appropriate and expected in a rural context. I find that the DL lends support for my findings. In particular, paragraph 9, which states '*...I recognise that there are glasshouses behind No 6, but those are buildings that are appropriate to a rural area.*' It goes on to say that '*..development in depth would consolidate and intensify the build form of development along this part of South Fen Road in stark suburban contrast to the existing transitional, more loose-knit feel of the area at the south-eastern edge of the settlement...*' This equally applies to the appeal before me.
17. Set against the harm identified, there would be social and economic benefits from the scheme, including boosting the supply of housing where future occupants would be within close reach of local facilities and public transport in Bourne. Whilst these matters weigh in favour of the proposal, their extent would be moderate and they do not outweigh the significant harm I have identified to character and appearance.

¹ APP/E2530/W/22/3294258 allowed 23 August 2022 for 'new single storey dwelling with garaging for proposed dwelling and number 22 The Green'

² Planning references S22/2243, S20/1862 and S21/0155.

³ APP/E2530/W/20/3254637 dismissed 15 October 2020 for 'residential development (outline)'.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh the adverse effects on character and appearance. Therefore, the appeal fails.

C Walker

INSPECTOR