



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 March 2025

by **L Fern BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 APRIL 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/24/3348452

Clensey Lane, Westborough, Dry Doddington NG23 5HT

- 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 Mrs and Mrs Fran and Gill Smith-Evison against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref is S23/2053.
 - The development proposed is temporary (2 year) essential need living accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. Planning permission, the Council Ref S22/1188, was granted on 16 August 2023 for the provision of an equestrian centre, to include livery, adjacent to the appeal site. This appeal proposal seeks temporary, what is described as essential need living accommodation, associated with the permitted equestrian centre.
3. The main issue in this appeal is whether or not there is an essential need for the proposed development, associated with the equestrian centre and livery use.

Reasons

4. The appeal site sits to the rear of an existing barn within a larger plot of grazing land, which is subdivided into paddocks, interspersed with small field shelters, sheds and a container. The site is located a substantial distance from the village of Dry Doddington, separated by fields. Given its isolated rural character, the appeal site is within the open countryside, which is undisputed by the parties. An important aspect of the development plan strategy is to limit development in the open countryside to that which has an essential need to be there.
5. A temporary residential dwelling is proposed to be sited for a period of 2 years to provide what is described in the application as essential need living accommodation for the operation of the equestrian business, for matters including security, emergencies and to fulfil customer expectations.
6. At my site visit it was observed that the stable block, barn and schooling area, shown on the submitted Proposed Block Plan Version 2.0 dated 26 April 2022, were not in-situ. From the evidence, these facilities were granted under the equestrian centre permission. Some horses were present in the paddocks to the rear of the property. However, from what was observed on site and from a lack of

evidence to the contrary, implies that the equestrian enterprise, subject of the appellants' Business Plan (April 2022), has not yet been substantially developed.

7. I am referred to relevant extracts of the Dwelling Assessment and Conclusion document from Kernon Countryside Consultancy Limited (Kernon). It is definitive in its conclusion that the presence of a low number of foaling horses does not necessitate a worker living on site all year round and that the needs could be met by being on site intermittently. Furthermore, the assessment concludes that at full occupancy of 8 livery, 4 breeding mares and a stallion, the operation would only generate a marginal need to live on site. I see no reason to conclude otherwise.
8. The appellants' Business Plan is comprehensive, and I see no reason to disagree with the Kernon assessment that the business is anticipated to be viable. However, the need for on-site accommodation is currently a theoretical one based on a planning permission and business plan. I note the Kernon assessment implies a temporary permission could allow the business to be re-assessed. However, without substantial implementation of the permission, construction of the on-site equestrian facilities and operation of the business to full capacity, there is presently no need for a worker to live on site. Therefore, it does not meet the requirements of policy SP5 of the Council's Local Plan (January 2020) (the LP).
9. Furthermore, it appears that technological innovations could be sufficient to aid the operation of the business. It is not put to me that the appellants live a long way from the site or demonstrated that response times and surveillance would not be sufficiently commensurate to the potential risks. The evidence points towards measures such as remote monitoring that could be utilised as an interim mechanism to allow the business to develop and grow, the business plan to be realised, and an essential need be sufficiently demonstrated.
10. For the above reasons, I find that there is no essential need at present for the siting of living accommodation in this location, and the proposal is therefore contrary to policies SP5 and SD1 of the LP, and paragraph 10 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The policies, amongst other matters, limit development within the open countryside to that which has an essential need to be located outside of the existing built form of a settlement and promote the principles of sustainable development.

Other Matters

11. Whilst I appreciate having on-site presence would provide a market advantage for the business and reassurance for its customers, I am mindful that planning is generally associated with public and not private interests. I find that an essential need has not yet been established and is presently theoretical in nature, and the harm associated with the siting of living accommodation in this isolated open countryside location outweighs these benefits. Moreover, it is not demonstrated that the approved equestrian centre and livery could not operate satisfactorily without living accommodation being present on the site.

Conclusion

12. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the Framework when read as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with them. For the reasons above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Fern

INSPECTOR