



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2025

by **P Storey BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/K2610/W/24/3349972

Land Of Green Ginger, Dereham Road, Reepham, Norfolk NR10 4QX

- 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 Mrs Helen Monk against the decision of Broadland District Council.
 - The application Ref is 2023/3427.
 - The development proposed is new self-build dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application sought outline planning permission with all matters reserved other than access. I have determined the appeal on this basis, and any details in relation to the reserved matters have been considered on an illustrative basis.
3. An update to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. The main parties were given the opportunity to comment on its implications, and I have taken any such comments into account in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the proposed development would be suitably located, having regard to the spatial strategy of the development plan and access to services and sustainable transport; and
 - whether the proposed development would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Suitability of location

5. The proposal is for a self-build dwelling within the garden of the existing residential property, Land of Green Ginger, a detached house on a spacious plot south of the B1145 Dereham Road.
6. The site lies outside any defined settlement boundary and is therefore classified as countryside under the development plan. Policy GC2 of the Broadland District Council Development Management DPD 2015 (the DMDPD) directs new development to within settlement limits. Outside these limits, development will only

be permitted if it causes no significant adverse impact and complies with a specific allocation or policy in the development plan.

7. The appellant argues that the proposal aligns with Policy 7.5 of the Greater Norwich Local Plan, Document 1 – The Strategy (Adoption Version for Councils, March 2024) (the GNLP), which supports small-scale development for self-build and custom-build homes on sites within or adjacent to settlements that lack a defined boundary.
8. The appellant asserts that they meet the criteria for inclusion on the Council's self-build register. They also contend that the site lies within the hamlet of Hackford Vale, described as a distinct settlement with historical significance, including a reference in the Domesday Book. Additional supporting factors include the presence of nearby dwellings and the listing of "Hackford Vale" in the property's given address on council tax records, which the appellant believes reinforces the site's location within a settlement without a defined boundary.
9. Whilst there is a cluster of residential development along the B1145, the appeal site is set apart from this, located along a more rural track where development is sparse and appears less integrated with neighbouring sites. Although I acknowledge the historical associations of Hackford Vale, I am not fully persuaded that the appeal site should be considered within a settlement.
10. Moreover, although the proposal is described as a self-build dwelling, no mechanism or legal agreement has been provided to secure its delivery as such. Therefore, even if I were to consider the site within a settlement, and the proposal was to meet all relevant criteria for self-build development in this location, I am not satisfied that it could be adequately secured as self-build. As a result, the proposal does not meet the requirements of Policy 7.5.
11. No other specific allocation or policy has been identified to support the proposal under Policy GC2. Nonetheless, the appellant highlights the site's proximity to allocated housing sites and the services and amenities of Reepham, a designated key service centre, accessible by road or permissive footpaths.
12. However, these connections are either along roads without footpaths or via unpaved and unlit paths. Hackford Vale has no services or amenities and public transport access is limited. Consequently, it is highly likely that future residents would rely on private vehicles for daily needs. I am therefore not persuaded that the site is in a sufficiently sustainable location to justify a departure from the development plan's established approach.
13. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not be suitably located in terms of the spatial strategy of the development plan or access to services and sustainable transport. As such, it would conflict with Policies GC1 and GC2 of the DMDPD, and Policies 7.3 and 7.5 of the GNLP. Collectively, these policies seek to follow the presumption in favour of sustainable development by directing growth to the most appropriate locations.

Character and appearance

14. The application was submitted in outline form, with all matters reserved except for access. As such, whilst I have had regard to the indicative proposals submitted,

my assessment in relation to the reserved matters is made on a purely illustrative basis.

15. The appeal site forms part of the generous garden of Land of Green Ginger, which is accessed via a track from the B1145. The existing property is a detached house with a traditional rural character, complemented by more recent contemporary extensions. It occupies the northern part of the plot, adjacent to the track, with an open frontage. The appeal site lies to the south, bordered by hedgerows along the track. Dense vegetation and mature trees line the southern and western boundaries, offering screening. The currently undefined boundary between the appeal site and the existing dwelling is proposed to be marked by hedgerows.
16. The nearest neighbouring property to the south also lies within a spacious plot and is accessed via the same track. As a result, the area has a residential character, but the existing dwellings are well spaced. Even with the addition of a new dwelling, a reasonable sense of openness and separation between properties would be maintained.
17. The illustrative plans suggest that the proposed dwelling would be of similar height to the existing house. Given the scale and position of the current dwelling, it would likely screen the new building from most public views along the B1145. Furthermore, the existing boundary vegetation would largely obscure views from neighbouring properties to the south and west. Although the dwelling would be visible from elevated ground in the open fields to the east, it would appear against a backdrop of mature vegetation, which would help soften its visual impact.
18. Taking these factors into account, I do not consider the introduction of an additional dwelling to result in unacceptable urbanisation, or an undesirable consolidation of built development in the countryside. Whilst there is potential for harm if the dwelling were poorly designed or out of scale, these details are not under consideration at this stage. There is no compelling evidence to suggest that such concerns could not be addressed during the reserved matters process.
19. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character or appearance of the area. In this respect, it would comply with Policies GC4 and EN2 of the DMDPD, which together seek to ensure high-quality design that respects local character and protects landscape character.

Other Matters

20. The appellant has provided several appeal decisions within Broadland and other nearby authorities that they consider comparable to this case. However, I have not been provided with full details of these cases or how they specifically compare to the proposal before me. The development plan context in these appeals is also different to the current proposal. In any event, I must determine this appeal based on the proposal before me, and those cited appeal decisions do not persuade me to alter my previous findings.
21. The site lies within the Zone of Influence of one or more European Sites identified under the Norfolk Green Infrastructure and Recreational Impact Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (GIRAMS). It is also located within the catchment of The Broads Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Broadland Ramsar, and the River Wensum SAC, which are sensitive to the effects of nutrient pollution resulting from new development.

22. Were I minded to allow the appeal, it would be necessary to consider the effects of the proposal on these European Sites within an appropriate assessment. However, as I have found the proposal to be unacceptable for other substantive reasons, it has not been necessary to carry out such an assessment in this case.

Planning Balance

23. Paragraph 11.d) of the Framework states that where there are no relevant development plan policies, or the policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, permission should be granted unless certain circumstances apply. Under paragraph 11.d) ii., this includes circumstances where the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
24. Footnote 8 of the Framework clarifies that, for applications involving the provision of housing, paragraph 11.d) is engaged where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council has confirmed that it is currently unable to meet this requirement, and therefore paragraph 11.d) is applicable in this case.
25. However, based on my previous findings, the policies most important for determining this appeal, particularly those seeking to direct development to sustainable locations, remain broadly consistent with the aims and objectives of the Framework. As such, they are not considered out-of-date.
26. The proposed development would make efficient use of available land and could be delivered reasonably quickly, whilst adding to the housing choice in the area. It would also deliver employment opportunities during construction and additional local spending, helping to support local services and amenities. Potential ecological and biodiversity benefits are also cited. These factors weigh in favour of the proposal and align with the aims of the Framework, which seek to boost the supply of homes.
27. However, the contribution of only one additional dwelling to the housing supply limits the scale of these benefits. Consequently, the harm resulting from the proposal's conflict with the development plan, as previously set out, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the modest benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

28. Although I have identified no harm in respect of the character and appearance of the area, the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, to lead me to a decision other than in accordance with the plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

P Storey

INSPECTOR