



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2026

by **G Dring BA (Hons) MA MRTPI MAUDE**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/W/25/3376335

34 Station Road, Holme Hale, Norfolk IP25 7DZ

- 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 Hayley Miles, Casini Developments Ltd against the decision of Breckland Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/1170/FMIN.
 - The development proposed is construction of a 2 storey, 4 bedroom detached house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether the site is in a suitable location for residential development, having regard to the spatial strategy of the development plan and the accessibility of services and facilities;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the proposal would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers.

Reasons

Location and accessibility

3. The site comprises part of the garden area of 34 Station Road and lies at the end of a row of dwellings which are removed from the main built up area of the settlement of Holme Hale. The site is not within any defined settlement boundary as identified in the Breckland Local Plan September 2023 (LP).
4. LP Policy GEN 05 sets out that development outside the defined settlement boundaries will only be acceptable where it is compliant with all relevant policies. LP Policy HOU 05 allows some development in small villages and hamlets outside of settlement boundaries, subject to satisfying certain criteria and compliance with other policies within the LP. The first criterion that must be met is that the development comprises sensitive infilling or the rounding off of a cluster of dwellings with access to an existing highway. The appellant contends that the development would represent rounding off rather than infilling.

5. Whilst not policy, the justification text for Policy HOU 05 provides an explanation as to what is meant by the term 'rounding off'. It is defined as the completion of an incomplete group of buildings on land which is already partially developed and in such a way which will either complete the local road pattern or define and complete the boundaries of the group.
6. I find that the site forms part of the garden area serving No 34, and as the dwelling located at the end of the row, it forms a well-defined end to the existing frontage development. Consequently, the site does not appear as an area of land which makes the group of buildings situated along Station Road appear incomplete currently. As such the development of the site would not appear as completing the local road pattern or group of buildings. I do not therefore consider that the proposal would represent rounding off.
7. Therefore, given the first criterion of LP Policy HOU 05 would not be met, the proposal is contrary to the spatial strategy set out in the development plan. I now turn to consider the accessibility of services and facilities.
8. Holme Hale is a small settlement that has limited services and facilities, including a church, hall and playground. The site is located at the end of a group of dwellings which are removed from the main built up area of Holme Hale with agricultural land situated in between. There is currently no pavement link between the appeal site and the limited services and facilities within Holme Hale.
9. The road between the site and the services and facilities within Holme Hale is narrow in places, rural in character, without streetlighting and much of the route is subject to the national speed limit. There is a Public Right of Way (PRoW) running along the edge of fields located further east along Station Road which does provide access into Holme Hale, however, this is along the edge of agricultural fields and would not be easily accessible for some. Given the condition of both of these route options, they would not form an attractive option for many, particularly during inclement weather, or in the dark. This would be the case even if a permissive footpath were provided along the field adjacent to the site, so that occupants would not have to walk along the road for the initial section of the route.
10. I am told that there is a regular bus service which can be accessed from the main built up area of Holme Hale, but as above, this is removed from the site and the route to and from the bus stop on foot or by cycle would not be an attractive option for many.
11. I therefore find that future occupants would be heavily reliant on the private vehicle to access day to day needs and the proposal would not provide the opportunity to maximise the use of sustainable transport options.
12. Consequently, I find that the site is not in a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to the spatial strategy set out in the development plan and the accessibility of services and facilities. The proposal is contrary to Policies GEN 01, GEN 03, GEN 05 and HOU 05 of the LP. These policies seek, amongst other things, that residential development is directed towards the most sustainable locations and is co-ordinated with transport provision to ensure good access to facilities and services.

Character and appearance

13. The site comprises the garden area to the side and rear of No 34 and has frontage onto the road. The garden area currently serving No 34 is larger than some of the other garden areas in this group of dwellings. The site follows the linear pattern of development present on the southern side of the road, where there are a mix of semi-detached and detached two storey dwellings and bungalows all with frontage onto the road. A hedgerow separates the site from the adjacent agricultural land to the east. Open countryside is also located beyond the garden area to the rear and on the opposite side of the road.
14. The spacing between dwellings varies along this side of the road with some having more spacious gaps in between than others, but generally detached dwellings are set off from both side boundaries, including 12a Station Road, which I have been referred to. Overall, the spacing between dwellings provides for variation in the street scene which contributes positively to the spacious character and appearance of the semi-rural area. In some cases, where detached dwellings are more closely related to the side boundaries of their respective plots, they are set further back from the road. Overall, the arrangement of built form contributes positively to the more spacious character and appearance of the area.
15. The proposed dwelling would not extend out into the open countryside and would be enclosed by the existing boundaries of the defined plot. The height and general design approach of the proposed dwelling including its orientation, along with the materials used would be in keeping with the existing development in this area.
16. However, the proposed dwelling would be situated in line with the front elevation of No 34 and the side elevation would sit on the side boundary closest to No 34. There would be no separation between the proposed dwelling and the side boundary and very little space between the proposed dwelling and No 34. As a result of this relationship, the proposal would appear dominant in the street scene and incongruous with the established pattern of development. It would negatively affect the more open and spacious characteristics of this group of dwellings and as a result would not respond appropriately to the more spacious qualities of the area.
17. I therefore find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policies COM 01 and GEN 02 of the LP. These policies seek, amongst other things, that development should reinforce, respect and be sensitive to the character of the surrounding area.

Living conditions

18. The Council contend that future occupants of the proposed dwelling would suffer from noise and light disturbance as a result of drivers accessing No 34, using the shared access.
19. Whilst the submitted artist's impression gives an indication on how the access might appear, it is identified as not being an accurate representation. There is no layout provided on the submitted drawings considered by the Council, that clearly identifies how the shared access and parking areas would be arranged. An illustrative drawing was provided with the appeal which shows that the access point would be aligned along the main boundary line between the properties before it would kick out to accommodate the shared access point, meaning that the main

window in the proposed dwelling that might be affected by vehicular disturbance would be the ground floor bedroom.

20. Whilst the information submitted could have been more detailed, I find that the vehicle movements associated with a single dwelling, the constrained parking area limiting the number of vehicles that could access No 34 and the use of boundary treatments which could be secured by condition, would mean that the overall level of disturbance from vehicles accessing No 34 would not result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of future occupants of the proposed dwelling.
21. I therefore find that the proposal would provide suitable living conditions for future occupants in this regard. Consequently, the proposal would comply with Policy COM 03 of the LP. This policy seeks, amongst other things, that developments provide adequate levels of amenity for future occupants.

Other Considerations

22. The appellant asserts that a permissive footpath would be provided along the neighbouring field, which is under their control, to provide a link to the PRoW, enhancing connectivity and accessibility for the wider community. Whilst this may form a benefit, there is no mechanism before me which would ensure this would be provided, nor is there any policy basis identified that would require these works. I am also told pedestrian infrastructure may also be provided as part of a renewable energy scheme in the future, although I have no further information on this matter.
23. I understand that the appellant is frustrated with the lack of engagement by the Council in considering the application. Nevertheless, I cannot take this matter into account in considering the appeal.

Planning Balance

24. The Council has confirmed that it cannot currently demonstrate a sufficient housing land supply. Consequently, Paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is engaged which states that permission should be granted, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having regard to key policies, including directing development to sustainable locations and securing well-designed places.
25. The Framework expects patterns of growth to be managed to promote walking, cycling and public transport use. At paragraph 135, the Framework states that development should be sympathetic to local character.
26. In these respects, the LP policies referred to above are in general consistency with the Framework. Therefore, the conflict between the proposal and LP Policies GEN 01, GEN 02, GEN 03, GEN 05, HOU 05 and COM 01 should be given significant weight in this appeal.
27. Whilst I have found that the proposal would not result in unacceptable harm to the living conditions of future occupants and that there would be no conflict with LP Policy COM 03 in this respect, there are no policies in the LP which positively favour development in this location and as the development is contrary to the policies referred to above, there is a conflict with the development plan as a whole.

28. The appeal scheme would provide one additional dwelling on a small site which could be built out quickly, adjacent to existing development where infrastructure is already located. The proposal would therefore add to the housing stock and would bring about social benefits. There would be economic benefits during the construction phase and after with future occupants supporting local services and facilities. I note the appellants intention to use local trades and businesses. Environmental benefits would result from the proposed landscaping scheme and the delivery of biodiversity net gain and the appellant asserts that it would result in the effective and efficient use of land. I note that the proposal would be constructed using modern sustainable construction methods and that cycle storage and an electric vehicle charging point would be provided. I find that whilst there would be social, economic and environmental benefits, these benefits would be moderate given the limited scale of development.
29. It is stated that there would be no harm to dark skies, that the proposal would not lead to increased risk of flooding and that the proposal would comply with recommendations made by the Highway Authority. It is also contended that the occupants of No 34 and the proposed dwelling would have sufficient outdoor amenity space and provision for off street parking and that there would be no harmful effects on the living conditions of neighbouring occupants. Even if I were to agree, a lack of harm or policy compliance in these respects would be neutral considerations that would weigh neither for nor against the proposal.
30. In terms of disadvantages, the proposal would not accord with the settlement strategy and would go against the plan-led approach endorsed by the Framework. Given the Council's current shortfall in housing land supply, I attribute only limited weight to the conflict in this regard.
31. The proposal does not meet the expectation set out in the Framework, that development should be actively managed to promote the use of sustainable forms of transport. Even taking account of the differences between sustainable transport solutions in rural and urban areas, the site location would result in future occupiers being highly dependent on private vehicles. I attribute significant weight to this matter.
32. I have found that there would be harm to the character and appearance of the area which would be at odds with the Framework. Given the long lasting effects of such harm, I attribute significant weight to this matter.
33. Consequently, I find that the adverse impacts in this case significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to directing development to sustainable locations and securing well-designed places. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.

Conclusion

34. I conclude that the proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations, including the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

G Dring
INSPECTOR