The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 July 2017

by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 7 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A2525/W/17/3172702
Worlds End Road, Tydd St Mary, Spalding PE13 5QN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs R Howes against the decision of South Holland District Council.
- The application Ref H21-1193-16, dated 21 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 January 2017.
- The development proposed is a residential development (5 indicative properties).

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. There are two main issues. These are a) the principle of the proposed development with specific regard to its location and the effect of it on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Principle of Development

3. The appeal site is part of an agricultural field to the east of Worlds End Road. It is located to the south of the village, distinctly separate from the built up edges thereof. Whilst the proposed development seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved for future consideration, the elongated nature and narrowness of the site infers individual frontage plots facing the road. Both by definition and in character terms, the appeal site is in the open countryside.

4. Tydd St Mary benefits from a limited range of services. It is considered by the existing Local Plan[1] to be capable of supporting new growth for this reason. Legitimately, one could argue that the appeal site is only a short distance from the edge of the village, a distance that to my mind would be easily walkable. That said, there is no segregated footway, the road is single width and it is unlit. Public transport is available within the village but it does not link to the appeal site and I have not been advised of a usable or practical public rights of way network. Travel to the services within the village via sustainable means

[1] South Holland Local Plan 2006

does not therefore seem practical or desirable on the face of the evidence before me, particularly for elderly or disabled residents.

5. Future occupiers of the dwellings would likely therefore rely predominately on the private car for accessing the services they would need for day to day living. This is the least sustainable travel option. Owing to the location of the appeal site a short distance from other dwellings, the new dwellings would not be truly isolated. Nonetheless, they would be so from those services on which residents would rely for support.

6. The appellant has brought my attention to an extended footway that will be installed along Worlds End Road to connect an extant planning permission[2] further north. They state that this could be easily extended to meet the appeal site. Be this as it may, this planning permission does not abut the appeal site and I have no details before me as to the land ownership between the aforementioned site and the appeal site and more appropriately no sufficiently robust mechanism before me to secure new footway works. I can therefore attach only very limited weight to this element.

7. With the above in mind, I am not satisfied that the proposed development would sit squarely with saved Policies SG1, SG2 and SG4 of the Local Plan. These Policies seek to ensure, amongst other things and along with the Framework[3], that new development follows sustainable principles, it is served by a choice of transport modes and it is restricted in the countryside for which there is an identified need.

Character and Appearance

8. As I have alluded to above, the appeal site is part of an agricultural field. There is no clear boundary between it and the road frontage and whilst there are some mature trees nearby, there is a distinct open and undeveloped feel to the area where built development is scattered and informal with some dwellings and farmyards present. The prevailing character, southern edge of the village aside, is one of open mainly arable and grass fields. There is a clear sense that the appeal site has a strong functional and visual relationship with the open countryside.

9. The proposed development would be formal and linear which would, notwithstanding final details of siting and design that would be agreed at a later date, garner a more urban appearance. Further, it would not be clustered and contained but stretch in a discordant ribbon layout, encroaching some considerable distance into the countryside, with a significant and noticeable gap between it and the built edge of the village.

10. For these reasons, I am of the view that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would conflict with saved Policy SG4 of the Local Plan. This Policy, amongst other things and along with the Framework, seeks to protect the countryside from unacceptable impacts for reasons of its intrinsic character and beauty.

[2] Council reference H21-0859-16
[3] The National Planning Policy Framework 2012

Balance

11. The Council are unable to demonstrate the supply of housing sites as required by the Framework. The evidence before me suggests that they are a historical and persistent under deliverer in this respect. With this in mind, I have had regard to the assertions of paragraphs 49 and 14 of the Framework. There seems little doubt in my mind that the village could support growth of the scale that is proposed. Being of a limited amount of dwellings, it would make an equally limited albeit positive contribution to undersupply. It would also have some economic and social benefits in the form of sustaining employment in the local construction industry and adding to housing choice and mix locally.

12. The overall scale of the proposed development would limit these benefits somewhat. The spatial detachment of it from the settlement would limit integration on a social level. The proposed plan does show some future development possibilities but these are not before me as part of the appeal scheme. There would also be environmental harm of some noticeable degree arising out of the erection of five new dwellings, in a ribbon form of development, encroaching into the open and undeveloped countryside.

13. Taking into account the limited nature of the beneficial elements of the scheme, I can only conclude that, for the purposes of the Framework, they would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the adverse impacts and would not therefore be a sustainable form of development.

Other Matters

14. My attention has been drawn to the draft South East Lincolnshire Local Plan (SELLP). It would appear from the evidence that the appeal site, and some other land to the fringes of the village, have been proposed as sites for possible future housing allocations. Whilst this gives an indication of the possible future development of the village, it remains just that. The SELLP still seems to be some way off adoption and is thus emerging. Notwithstanding the existing shortfall in housing supply, I can only ascribe very limited weight to the SELLP for this reason.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR