The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2020 by Darren Ellis MPlan

Decision by Jonathan Hockley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20th March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/A2525/W/19/3240718
Rear of 48 Broadgate, Whaplode Drove, Spalding, PE12 0TN

- 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 & Mrs R Tomizzi against the decision of South Holland District Council.
- The application Ref H23-0331-19, dated 22 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 May 2019.
- The development proposed is residential development.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matter

3. The application was submitted in outline with all matters reserved for subsequent approval. Subsequently I have assessed the appeal proposal on that basis and have considered submitted plans as indicative except where otherwise indicated.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the site is a suitable location for housing, having regard to the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site comprises an open field to the rear of No 48 Broadgate and is situated outside, albeit abutting, the settlement boundary of Whaplode Drove. The proposal seeks outline permission for the erection of three detached dwellings. Given that the application is in outline, only indicative details of the proposed dwellings have been submitted.

6. The area surrounding the site is predominantly characterised by a strong linear pattern of development with dwellings fronting the street, with open countryside and farmland to the rear of the properties. The proposed dwellings would be constructed to the rear of No 48 and would not front the street, and

as such would be out-of-keeping with the predominantly linear pattern of development.

7. The appeal site, which is grassed, has an open appearance and abuts on to open fields, and currently contributes positively to the semi-rural character of the countryside. The construction of three dwellings on the site, regardless of scale and appearance, would be visible from the road and would reduce the open qualities of the site. Whilst I acknowledge that this is a substantial site that could physically accommodate three dwellings, the proposed development would substantially alter the character and appearance of the site from an agricultural farmland aspect to a residential character.

8. For these reasons, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the area and as such would be contrary to Policies 2 and 3 of the South East Lincolnshire Local Plan 2011-2036, adopted March 2019, (SELLP). These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that sustainable development considerations are met considering the relationship to existing development and land uses. The supporting text to Policy 3 notes that development should sit comfortably with and add positively to its townscape or landscape surroundings.

9. The SELLP sets out a spatial strategy to help meet the development needs of the area in a sustainable manner. Within Policy 1 of the SELLP Whaplode Drive is designated as an other service centre and settlement in an area of development restraint. Inside the settlement boundaries for such villages development will be permitted that supports their role as a service centre for the settlement itself, helps sustain facilities or helps meet the service needs of other local communities. As the appeal site falls outside of the settlement boundary of Whaplode Drove, the site is designated as being within the countryside, where Policy 1 states that development will be permitted where it is necessary to such a location and/or where it can be demonstrated that it meets the sustainable needs of the area in terms of economic, community or environmental benefits.

10. I accept that residential development can help small villages such as Whaplode Drove to sustain their existing facilities and note that Policy 1 of the SELLP seeks to support such development within settlement boundaries, stating that development will normally be limited to committed sites and infill. No evidence has been submitted that demonstrates that the proposed dwellings are necessary in this location or that the sustainable needs of Whaplode Drove are dependent on this development, and the appellant notes that the local shop and post office are thriving and that the village has a bus service and is beginning to regenerate itself. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated that there are no other suitable sites for housing within the settlement boundary. As such the proposal does not meet the requirements of Policy 1 of the SELLP.

11. I have been referred to three previous schemes for new dwellings that have recently been granted planning permission near to the appeal site, one of which is for a backland development scheme adjacent to the appeal site. However, two of the schemes were for dwellings that had frontages onto the street, which differs from the appeal proposal. All three of the permissions were granted at a time when the Council did not have a five-year housing land supply, and as such were granted consent in a differing policy environment. Furthermore, local policy has changed since the previous consents with the

SELLP being adopted in March 2019. For these reasons, the previous permissions are not directly comparable to the proposal before me and do not justify additional housing development against the predominant character and linear pattern of development.

Other Matters

12. The provision of three additional units would make a limited difference to the supply of housing in the area. There would be a small social benefit in providing extra housing units, and economic advantages would also arise from the construction and occupation of the new houses. However, the harm to the character and appearance of the area identified would be significant and as a result the environmental role of sustainable development would not be achieved.

13. The neighbour at No 44 has raised concerns regarding privacy and highway safety. As this is an outline application which seeks to establish the principle of development in this location, with details of matters including layout, scale and access being reserved to be determined at a later date, it is not possible to assess the impact of the proposed development on these issues at this stage.

Conclusion

14. I therefore conclude that the site is not a suitable location for housing, having regard to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would be contrary to policies 1, 2 and 3 of the SELLP. Therefore, for the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Darren Ellis

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

15. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR