



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 October 2009

by **Anthony Lyman BSc(Hons) DipTP**
MRTPI

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

The Planning Inspectorate
4/11 Eagle Wing
Temple Quay House
2 The Square
Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6PN

☎ 0117 372 6372
email: enquiries@pins.gsi.gov.uk

Decision date:
10 November 2009

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/A/09/2105159
Field View Guest House, Green Lane, Yarm, TS15 9EH

- 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 Steve Holden against the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- The application Ref 08/2976/OUT, dated 23 September 2008, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2008.
- The development proposed is the erection of four log cabins.

Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Procedural matter

2. The application was made for outline permission with all matters reserved for future determination.

Main issue

3. The main issue in relation to this appeal is whether the proposed development is appropriate having regard to national and local policies which aim to protect the countryside.

Reasons

4. The appellant owns and operates the Field View Guest House which is on the south side of the B1264, Green Lane, Yarm. Adjacent to the Guest House and running parallel to the main road there is a field of approximately 0.6ha on which outline permission is sought for the erection of four log cabins to be used as additional accommodation to the existing bed and breakfast business.
 5. Green Lane forms the development boundary to the built up area of Yarm, as defined in the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan, (SLP). Residential development, a garage and a large school immediately abut the north side of the road. Beyond the development limit, on the other side of the road, there are isolated developments including the appellant's business and residence, a car park for the nearby Yarm Station and school playing fields. Nevertheless, the overriding character of the area south of Green Lane is open countryside, of which the appeal field clearly forms part.
 6. Policy EN13 of the SLP relates to development outside the development limits and, amongst other things, permits small scale facilities for tourism, provided that they do not harm the character or appearance of the countryside. The SLP
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does not define 'small scale'. However, the Council consider that if each cabin had two bedrooms, the proposal would increase the existing number of bedrooms in the business by 50% which would not represent a small scale development. I note the appellant's argument that, the rooms in the cabins would not be let individually and that the percentage increase would be less.

7. Nevertheless, I consider that, the provision of these four units of holiday accommodation, on a site of this size, must be considered cumulatively with the guest house which has recently been granted permission for further expansion. The appellant emphasises that the log cabins would be used in conjunction with the existing guest house and that there would be a 'strong physical relationship with the appellant's existing business premises'. Therefore, I do not consider that, in terms of Policy EN13, the cabins can be considered in isolation or described as small scale.
8. Planning Policy Statement 7 – Sustainable Development in Rural Areas, (PPS7), supports the provision of tourism facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met. The Good Practice Guide on Planning for Tourism (GPG) with specific reference to caravan and chalet parks, states that *where there is an identified demand for new or expanded sites, planners should ensure that environmental impacts and impacts on visual amenity are minimised*. The appellant argues that because the guest house is full at certain times of the year this demonstrates that there is a shortage of tourist accommodation in the area. However, I am not persuaded by this argument as I have seen no evidence to substantiate this claim throughout the Yarm area. Furthermore, I am not convinced that the claimed high demand for bed and breakfast accommodation in the Guest House, necessarily demonstrates the need for self catering holiday accommodation in log cabins.
9. The appeal site's boundary alongside Green Lane is marked by a substantial roadside hedge which the appellant claims would screen views of the chalets from the public realm. However, the hedgerow is largely deciduous, and even at the time of my site visit, before all the leaves had fallen, it was possible to see into the field from the main road. Therefore, the chalets would not be totally obscured from view and I agree with the Council that the repetitive log cabins would not be typical of the built form in the area and would appear incongruous in this rural setting.
10. I conclude that the appeal site would not be an appropriate location for the proposed development due to the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy EN13 of the SLP and the provisions of PPS7 and the GPG. Therefore, for the reasons given and having had regard to all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

Anthony Lyman

INSPECTOR