



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2011

by Graham Edward Snowdon BA BPhil Dip Mgmt MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8 November 2011

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/A/11/2157777

**Ingleby Hill Farm House, Ingleby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland
TS17 0HU**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Craig Pearson against the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 11/0967/FUL, dated 4 May 2011, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2011.
 - The development proposed is an extension to stables previously approved under application no 07/1677/COU and change of use of agricultural land to paddock.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the amenity value and openness of the "Green wedge" separating Ingleby Barwick from Yarm.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is an open paddock area to the rear of domestic property in Heddon Grove and to the east of the existing farmhouse. The southern boundary of the housing to the north forms a distinct urban edge to the settlement before the land falls steeply away down into the valley of the river Leven, a tributary of the Tees. There is currently a four stall stable block on the site. The proposal is to extend this eastwards to provide a further 12 stables.
4. Policy CS10 in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document (Core Strategy), which was adopted in March 2010, relates to Environmental Protection and Enhancement. Included within its provisions is an intention to maintain the separation between settlements and the quality of the urban environment, through, among other things, the protection and enhancement of the openness and amenity value of "Green wedges" within the conurbation, including the Leven Valley between Yarm and Ingleby Barwick, in which the

appeal site is located. I consider this to be the key policy against which the present proposal needs to be assessed.

5. Stables are the sort of development that one would expect to see in a rural area on the fringe of an urban conurbation and the proposal is of a reasonably traditional design. The proposed structure, like the existing stable block would be partly cut into the hillside and would be well screened in views from the north by existing planting, which, I note, the appellant is willing to reinforce. In distant views from the south, although occupying an elevated position, the stables would largely be viewed against a vegetated backdrop, with the upper floors of suburban housing projecting above this. Overall, therefore, I consider that the proposal would have limited impact on the amenity value of this Green wedge area in terms of character or land use.
6. However, the impact on "openness" would be much more significant. Although the existing stable block on the site has some impact, the present proposal would involve a long linear extension of built form – some 35 metres – into an area which is currently open and free of built development. I consider that this would significantly prejudice the openness of the area, contrary to the purpose behind Policy CS10. On its own, I consider this to be sufficient reason for the appeal to fail. I have noted the fact that something of a precedent has been created by the granting of permission for the existing stable block in 2009 and my attention is drawn to a stable permitted to the west of Ingleby Hill Farm. It is not clear whether the latter lies within the designated Green wedge, but I am not familiar with the particular circumstances surrounding these developments or whether there was any particular reason for departing from established policy to protect the openness of the area. Whatever the situation, I do not consider that these developments provide justification for further erosion of openness, which is an essential element in maintaining the visual separation between settlements.
7. On the main issue, therefore, I conclude that, whilst the impact of the proposal on the amenity value of the "Green wedge" separating Ingleby Barwick from Yarm would be limited, the impact on its openness would be significant and detrimental to the aims of Core Strategy Policy CS10.
8. Although it is not the function of the planning system to ensure the maintenance of private views, I consider that the height and location of the proposal would have little effect on outlook from the rear of properties in Heddon Grove. I also consider that, although the access from Heddon Grove to the site is narrow, provided that the use of the stables could be restricted to the private use intended, the generation of traffic from the proposal would not give rise to any problems for users of the highway network. I note that this view is shared by the highway authority. Agricultural and equine uses do generate odours and attract flies, but this is part and parcel of a rural area and I am satisfied that the location vis-à-vis residential property would be unlikely to generate any significant problems in this respect. There is no evidence before me that the existing stables on the site have caused such problems.
9. Nevertheless, none of these conclusions, or other matters raised by local residents, influences my view that the development is unacceptable in principle.

10. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G E Snowdon

INSPECTOR