



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2014

by D R Cullingford BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 18 February 2014

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/A/13/2208405

Tees View, Worsall Road, Yarm, TS15 9EF

- This appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is by Mr Peter Clemmet against the decision of the Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
 - The application (ref: 13/1831/FUL and dated 23 July 2013) was refused by notice dated 26 September 2013.
 - The development is described as the 'erection of detached dormer bungalow (demolition of existing agricultural building)'.
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Decision

1. I dismiss this appeal.

Main issue

2. From what I have read and seen, I consider that this appeal turns on whether the proposed dwelling would represent an unwarranted intrusion into the countryside, contrary to policies CS3 and CS10 of the adopted Core Strategy 2010, 'saved' policy EN13 of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan 1997, and advice in the Framework (NPPF).

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies amongst a small collection of shed-like barns and buildings amidst fields and farmland at the end of a track about 150m to the north of Worsall Road and the extensive estates in this part of Yarm. The scheme entails the removal of a dilapidated corrugated Nissan hut-like structure beside a ménage and its replacement with a 3-bedroom dormer bungalow. The other barns and the ménage would remain and the entrance to the access track would be re-configured. The intention is that the appearance of the bungalow would emulate that of a 'barn conversion'. To that end the design incorporates some large arched openings and some slit-like windows.
4. In spite of the nearby barns and the intended landscaping, the proposed bungalow would appear isolated as a single dwelling amidst fields and farmland remotely positioned at the end of a track traversing 150m of an evidently rural landscape. In such places, policy EN13 (in line with long-established Government policy to protect the countryside) seeks to severely limit development that does not require a rural location or fulfil an appropriate rural purpose. No such requirement or purpose is claimed for this scheme. And, although the design of the bungalow would be pleasant enough, it would

certainly not exhibit the sort of 'exceptional quality' envisaged in the Framework as warranting an occasional exception for new isolated homes in the countryside.

5. In any case, the site is part of a 'strategic gap' between the conurbation and the surrounding villages, the openness and amenity value of which is to be enhanced (policy CS10). The Landscape Capacity Study indicates that this area has a low capacity to accommodate change and the evidence demonstrates that the dwelling would be seen from vantage points on Worsall Road and from across the valley of the River Tees. The scheme would not enhance the openness of this 'strategic gap' because, although a modest corrugated structure would be removed, the new dwelling would be seen as an incongruously isolated dwelling intruding into the countryside and impinging on the character of the landscape. The historic scattering of dwellings that already exist to the north of the Worsall Road do not provide precedents to follow, not least because the repetition of such development could, all too easily, radically alter the countryside here.
6. I read that the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of identifiable housing sites so that housing applications are to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development and decisions made in accordance with paragraph 14 of the Framework (NPPF). However, even though policies for the supply of housing may be 'out-of-date' and development necessarily countenanced beyond settlement limits, policies designed to protect the character of the countryside, the openness of 'strategic gaps' and the appearance of sensitive landscapes might well be worth maintaining for sound planning reasons endorsed by the Framework. Indeed, that is the case here for the core planning principles advocated in the Framework indicate that decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and enhance or improve the places in which people live their lives. Such aims chime with policies CS3, CS10 and 'saved' policy EN13. For all those reasons, I consider that this scheme would represent an unwarranted intrusion into the countryside, contrary to policies CS3, CS10 and 'saved' policy EN13 as well as the advice advanced in the Framework.
7. I have considered all the other matters raised. The claim is that large housing schemes beyond development limits at Morley Carr Farm and Green Lane warrant permission for the proposed development. But, unlike the appeal proposal both those schemes should contribute significantly to the 5-year housing land supply and neither was in a 'sensitive landscape'. The relevant 'planning balance' is thus quite different. The other cited developments are at Preston Farm, but they lie within the limits to development. Hence, and in spite of considering all the other matters raised, I find nothing sufficiently compelling to alter my conclusion that this appeal should be dismissed.

David Cullingford
INSPECTOR