



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2019

by **Gary Deane BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th April 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/U2370/W/18/3216999

Oaklands, Underbank Road, Thornton Cleveleys FY5 5LN

- 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 Mrs Delyse Cartmell against the decision of Wyre Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00650/FUL, dated 3 July 2018, was refused by notice dated 28 August 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a new 2-bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matters

2. On 28 February 2019, the Council adopted the Wyre Local Plan (2011-2031) (LP), which has replaced the saved policies of the Wyre Borough Plan 1999, to which the Council's reason for refusal and the evidence refer. The main parties have had the opportunity to submit comments in relation to the LP, although none has been received.
3. On 19 February 2019, the Government published its Housing Delivery Test (HDT) results alongside an updated revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The HDT outcome for the Council indicates that the delivery has been above the requirement over the last 3 years. The matter of the Council's 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites is not an issue between the main parties. There is no change to the housing position as a result.
4. The revisions to the Framework do not otherwise materially alter the national policy approach in respect of the issues raised in this appeal and therefore the main parties have not been prejudiced by the updates to this document.

Main issues

5. The main issues are firstly, whether the site would be a suitable location for housing, having particular regard to its location and accessibility to services and facilities; and secondly, the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the local area.

Reasons

6. The proposal is to erect a detached dwelling on land adjacent to Oaklands, which is a detached residential property that stands among a small group of buildings along Underbank Road within the countryside, as defined in the LP.

Paragraph 170 of the Framework states that planning decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. LP Policy SP4 echoes this approach. It also lists the types of development that would be acceptable in countryside areas, none of which would apply in this case. The appeal scheme is, therefore, contrary to LP Policy SP4.

7. To promote sustainable communities, LP Policy SP2 states that development should be located where it, amongst other things, minimises the need to travel by car. In this instance, a good range of shops and local services can be found in Thornton, which is some distance from the site. While I saw some facilities such as shops and a church along roads nearer to the site, very few would prompt a lengthy walk or cycle from the site especially given that the initial route would involve a narrow and unlit road with no dedicated footway. No details have been provided of public transport services in the local area.
8. On that basis, it cannot be reasonably assumed that future occupiers would regularly walk the considerable distance to most services and facilities, or would wish to carry shopping or other items over the distance involved, or would walk it in inclement weather or after dark. It is very likely that car borne trips to and from the new dwelling would predominate. Consequently, the proposal would be at odds with LP Policy SP2.
9. With its largely grassed area and established vegetation, I share the Council's view that the site adds to the spacious semi-rural character and appearance of the local area. By introducing a substantial new built form, the proposal would erode that sense of openness and verdant character. The site would be transformed from a pleasant area of undeveloped green space to one occupied by a dwelling where people would live and visit. Despite the partial screening provided by the existing vegetation around the site, which would be retained, the new addition would be conspicuous in views from Underbank Road. From this highway, the proposal would reduce the spacious undeveloped qualities of the site and unacceptably harm the intrinsic character and appearance of the countryside notwithstanding the presence of other buildings nearby.
10. On the main issues, I therefore conclude that the site would not be a suitable location for housing and that the proposed development would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. Of the policies cited by the Council that are most relevant to the proposal, it conflicts with LP Policies SP1, SP2 and SP4. These policies aim to ensure that development protects the countryside, respects the character of the area and minimises the need to travel by car.
11. The scale, design and appearance of the new dwelling would be appropriate and in keeping with nearby properties. Access would be from Underbank Road, to which the Highway Authority raises no objection. I have no reason to disagree with that finding. The site is available for development and the proposal would add to the amount and choice of new housing. It would also contribute to the local economy during the construction phase through the sale of materials and future occupiers would support the vitality of the local community. These considerations are either neutral or weigh in support of the appellant's case.
12. However, the new dwelling would not be in an accessible location and future occupiers would be heavily reliant on the use of the private car for most journeys. As such, the proposal would be contrary to the aims of the LP and

the Framework to minimise the need to travel and to support the transition to a low carbon future. This, and the harm to the character and appearance of the local area mean that the environmental objective of sustainable development would not be achieved. To my mind, the public benefits of the scheme would be limited and would not outweigh the harm that I have identified. As such, the overall planning balance is tipped firmly against the appeal scheme.

13. An interested party raises additional concerns with regard to drainage and traffic. These are important matters and I have taken into account all of the submitted evidence. However, given my findings on the main issues, these are not matters on which my decision has turned.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gary Deane

INSPECTOR