
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 June 2016

by Isobel McCretton BA(Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22nd June 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/H0738/W/16/3146905

**The Farmhouse, Ingleby Hill Farm, Ingleby Barwick, Stockton-on-Tees
TS17 0HU**

- 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 Craig Pearson against the decision of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 15/0900/OUT, dated 10 April 2015, was refused by notice dated 10 September 2015.
 - The development proposed is the construction of an eco holiday lodge and associated landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was in outline with all matters reserved other than access i.e. scale, appearance, layout and landscaping are reserved for future consideration.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the Special Landscape Area (SLA).

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies to the south east of the Ingleby Hill Farm complex and is accessed via a track leading from the main farm access which, in turn, leads from Heddon Grove. It is currently a paddock with a wooden stable building. It is proposed to replace the stable with a single storey 'eco' holiday lodge. Indicative drawings and the accompanying Design and Access Statement (DAS) (which sets the parameters for the development) show that it would have a gently sloping, mono-pitched sedum roof and be cut into the slope of the land. There would be a veranda and large glazed windows on the southern elevation. The lodge would incorporate a number of measures and features to make it environmentally sustainable. Parking space for 2 cars would be provided and there would be substantial planting to the southern and eastern boundaries of the site.
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5. The appeal site adjoins, but lies outside, the defined settlement boundary for Ingleby Barwick. It sits at the top of a steeply sloping valley which leads down to the river Leven. The urban edge immediately to the north of the appeal site is highly defined by housing. To the south, east and west, however, is a more natural, rural landscape.
6. The site is within a designated SLA and is also within the Leven Valley Green Wedge between Ingleby Barwick and Yarm and the Tees Heritage Park. The Council states that the Green Wedge and Tees Heritage Park are designed to be high quality natural green spaces close to residential communities. The Officer's report states that the Stockton-on-Tees Landscape Character Assessment and Capacity Study (2011) identified the area as having very low landscape capacity, i.e. the landscape would not accommodate change without significant impact.
7. The appellant argues that, by accepting the stable building, the Council has already defined an acceptable distance that a structure can protrude into the SLA. However, I consider this to be an over-simplified argument. The stable building is the type of structure that is typical of the rural landscape, especially on the urban fringe, as is the associated activity. While the proposed lodge would be based largely on the footprint of the stables, there would be some additional bulk and mass to the front and sides. More importantly, it would result in the introduction of an urban form, out of keeping with the rural character of the area. The lodge would be domestic in appearance, with large areas of glazing in comparison with the stables, and its uncharacteristic nature would be emphasised by the likely addition of domestic paraphernalia such as outdoor seating, tables, umbrellas, barbeques etc. Therefore the character of the development and the pattern of activity would be very different.
8. Although the appellant states that heavy native species planting would screen the southern and eastern boundaries, this would take some time to mature. Furthermore, even though it might be screened from view the development would, nevertheless, be an unsympathetic incursion into the SLA both in terms of appearance and use and the screening would not make it acceptable. The openness of this area was noted by the inspector in a previous appeal¹ where a proposal for a large extension to the stables was dismissed because of the adverse impact on the open character of the landscape and I have no reason to disagree with that decision.
9. The appellant argues that the development of 34 chalets within the SLA at Leven Camp has undermined the SLA classification. However, the Council has detailed the complicated history behind the permission for that site. The permission for the chalets followed on from various applications, appeals and court decisions which established that the historic permission for the site, dating back to the inter-war period, was still extant. An application in 2012 sought to change the building types on the site and permission was granted on the basis that a less dense development was achieved. I therefore do not accept that this sets a precedent for further development in the SLA.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the SLA. It would not accord with policy CS10 of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010) which, among other things, seeks to maintain the separation between Yarm and Ingleby Barwick

¹ Ref. APP/H0738/A/11/2157777 dated 8/11/11

through the protection and enhancement of the openness and amenity value of Leven Valley Green Wedge. Nor would it accord with saved policy EN7 of the Stockton-on-Tess Local Plan 1(1997) which resists development which harms the landscape value of the Leven Valley.

Other Matters

11. Local residents have expressed concern about additional traffic which could result from the development. However, the proposal would utilise an existing access and there is no substantiated evidence which demonstrates that there would be a material increase in traffic as a result of this proposal. I also note that the Highway Authority has raised no objection in this regard.
12. There is also concern that this development would set a precedent for further development at Ingleby Hill Farm and within the Green Wedge, but each case must be considered on its own merits. This has therefore not contributed to my decision not to grant planning permission.
13. Nonetheless, neither of these matters outweighs my conclusions above on the main issue with regard to the adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Isobel McCretton

INSPECTOR