



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 November 2006

by **Bern Hellier BA(Hons) MRTPI**

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

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Date: 29 November 2006

Appeal Ref: APP/Q2908/A/06/2022244

Dene House Farm, Longframlington, Morpeth, NE65 8EE

- 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 Dene House Leisure against the decision of Alnwick District Council.
- The application (Ref A/2005/0566), dated 6 October 2005, was refused by notice dated 28 February 2006.
- The development proposed is bed and breakfast, laundry and leisure building as an extension to the existing leisure facility.

Summary of Decision: The appeal is allowed and planning permission granted subject to conditions set out in the Formal Decision below.

Procedural Matter

1. The description of the proposal on the application form is inaccurate because three buildings are proposed. The application is for bed and breakfast accommodation, a laundry building and an extension to the existing leisure facility. I have adopted this description.

Main Issues

2. I consider that there are three main issues.
 - Whether the proposal would be a sustainable form of development in the open countryside.
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area.
 - The effect on traffic conditions on Harrogate Lane.

Planning Policy

3. The development plan includes the First Alteration of the Northumberland County and National Park Joint Structure Plan (JSP) adopted in February 2005 and the Alnwick District Wide Local Plan (LP) adopted in April 1997.
4. The appeal site lies outside the Longframlington development boundary and, from a policy point of view, lies in the open countryside. The JSP development strategy is to focus development in rural areas into the main towns. JSP Policy S2 sets out a presumption against new development in the open countryside but allows some exceptions, including farm diversification proposals. JSP Policy ED11 and LP Policy RE20 encourage farm diversification proposals for tourism provided the effect on the landscape and road network is acceptable and they are consistent with other land use policies.

accommodation would be purpose built and occupied on short term lets. Whilst it is not in a location that would normally be suitable for new permanent housing, I am satisfied that an appropriate condition would secure the proposed occupancy arrangements and prevent the use of the building as a permanent dwelling.

The effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area.

13. The countryside surrounding the site is undulating and well wooded with a scattering of individual dwellings and farm groups. Dene House Farm and the adjacent buildings at Low Hall form a building cluster that sits comfortably in the landscape, although it is open to views from the Newton-on-the-Moor road to the west.
14. The new buildings would complement the existing development in design and use of external materials. They would be contained within the development envelope created by the existing building group. The new serviced accommodation would be clearly visible from the west. However, it would be single storey, set at a lower level than the manager's house, and seen against a backcloth of the leisure building behind, so that it would not intrude significantly into its rural setting. The proposal as a whole would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the surrounding rural area and would satisfy the provisions of LP Policy RE23 and the relevant criteria in JSP Policy ED11 and LP Policy RE20.

The effect on traffic conditions on Harrogate Lane

15. Road access to the appeal site is along Harrogate Lane, a single track road with informal passing places at intervals. At present the road provides vehicular access to some ten residential properties, six holiday cottages and the leisure facility. I also observed some pedestrian use. The appellants state that the use of the leisure building is not expected to increase significantly, but I agree with the Council that some increase in traffic should be anticipated, together with that from the four units of serviced accommodation. However, even though I consider the estimate from the appellants to be low, there is no evidence that there would be a substantial increase.
16. I acknowledge that the narrowness of the lane and lack of a footway can result in conflicts between vehicles travelling in opposite directions and between vehicles and pedestrians, There is evidence of some overriding onto the grass verge. Even so the highway authority does not consider the present situation is so unsatisfactory as to preclude further development along the lane and neither do I. The likely level of additional traffic would not add significantly to existing dangers and I conclude that the proposal would not have a materially detrimental effect on traffic conditions on Harrogate Lane and that LP Policy TT4 would be satisfied.

Other matter

17. The proposal would adapt the existing leisure facility to allow for full use by people with disabilities and would provide fully accessible accommodation. As such it meets the requirements of LP Policies CD26 and CD30 that new recreational developments should cater for the needs of the elderly and people with disabilities. This is a positive contribution to equal opportunities which I have taken into account in my decision.

planning authority. Such details shall include the type, colour and texture of materials. The development shall be carried out as approved.

- 3) The occupation of the new holiday accommodation building shall be restricted to genuine holidaymakers for individual periods not exceeding 4 weeks in total in any consecutive period of 13 weeks. A register of holidaymakers shall be kept and made available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Council at all reasonable times.
- 4) The areas allocated for parking on the submitted plan shall be kept clear of obstruction and shall not be used other than for the parking of vehicles in connection with the development hereby permitted.
- 5) The existing access shall be modified, made up and surfaced with bituminous material in accordance with Type 6 of the Northumberland County Council standard specifications. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until these works have been completed.

Bern Hellier

INSPECTOR