
Housing development to replace cattery thrown out on appeal

Plans to replace the former cattery, kennels and equestrian centre at Cleavesty Lane have been rejected on appeal. East Keswick Parish Council had always been opposed to them on grounds of development outside the village, on green belt, on a single track road close to a difficult junction with a 60mph A class road. Leeds City Council supported this point of view and rejected the idea but the landowner – Anthony Burrows – appealed to the Secretary of State who announced an inquiry chaired by Mark Dakeyne, a duly authorised planning inspector. An inquiry was held on August 12th and 13th and included a site visit. The decision of the inspector was published in late August. He dismissed the appeal, rejecting the development.

In his judgement, he says the main issues of the appeal are the effect on the openness of the Green belt, the effect on the character and appearance of the landscape, whether the proposal would result in an unsustainable pattern of development and whether harm to the Green Belt might be outweighed by other considerations so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the development. The site is currently vacant, the cattery kennels and equestrian centre having closed some two years ago. The buildings, the inspector stated, were utilitarian and, for the most part, dilapidated. Although new housing might be better than the present buildings, the inspector said that ‘the proposed dwelling group in combination with the existing dwelling of Cleavesty Lodge, whilst not of sufficient scale as to constitute a hamlet, would result in a sporadic form of residential development within the open countryside’. He continued that the site lay outside any defined settlement. The 923 bus passed the site but its frequency and timings preclude against use for most journeys to work or school. The nearest bus stops for the 99 service were a 15 minute walk away on a route without pavements. In his view, most journeys undertaken by the residents of such a development would have been by car to Collingham, Wetherby and employment centres further away. In summary the inspector found that the ‘significant benefit to openness and limited benefit to nature conservation would not clearly outweigh the substantial harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriate development and the other significant harm caused by the unsustainable nature of the proposal’. Consequently, the appeal was dismissed.