



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2019

by Victor Callister BA(Hons) PGC(Oxon) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/19/3226545

**Agricultural Land to the west of the dwelling known as Priory View,
Ramsdell Road, Pamber End RG26 5QS**

- 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 Pamber Place Ltd against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/00858/OUT, dated 22 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 4 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is for the erection of 4 dwellings with access off Ramsdell Road.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The Council has updated its statement of case and has confirmed that, in line with the Housing Delivery Test 2019, it cannot identify a 5 year housing supply as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Accordingly, the Council considers that Policies SS1 and SS6 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029) 2016 (the LP), which set out that required development can be met within the defined Settlement Policy Boundaries and that development in the countryside will only be acceptable in set exceptional circumstances, are out of date. For this reason, the Council has withdrawn Reason 1 of its reasons for refusal, as set out on the Decision Notice for the application Ref 18/00858/OUT dated 4 December 2018.
3. The Appellant has confirmed acceptance of the withdrawal of this reason for refusal and, as I concur with both parties on this matter, have, therefore, determined this appeal in line with Paragraph 11 of the Framework. This states that for decision taking, where policies which are most important for determining the application are out-of-date, granting permission, unless the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed; or any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Main Issues

4. The main issues of this appeal are the effect of the proposal on:

- the character and appearance of the local area; and,
- the setting of the Grade II listed Pamber Place.

Reasons

The character and appearance of the local area

5. The proposal is for outline permission for 4 detached dwellings, 2 with 2 bedrooms and 2 with 3 bedrooms, with all matters apart from access reserved for further consideration. I have therefore considered the plans that show the layout of the dwellings as indicative.
6. Adjacent to the appeal site, towards the junction of Ramsdell Road with Aldermaston Road there is a row of dwellings that appear as the developed edge of the village. The appeal site forms part of a large open field in agricultural use on the North side of Ramsdell, which, away from the village and in the area of the appeal site, has the character and appearance of a quiet country lane. The opposite side of the road is also fronted by undeveloped land, which combines with the appeal site and other surrounding fields to the north, to give the appearance of continuous fields in an open area of countryside.
7. If developed as illustrated in the proposal plans, the proposed development of 4 detached dwellings would front the proposed access road, that would be located between the proposed houses and Ramsdell Road and separated by a tree and shrub screen. Although this would extend the built up area of the village into the existing open field, it would do so in a manner that is out of keeping and incongruous in relation to the prevailing pattern of local development, which is of predominantly individual detached dwellings behind generous front gardens with their own individual street frontage and access.
8. Furthermore, the scale of the proposed dwellings, along with its proposed access road and other external fixtures associated with a residential area of the layout proposed would result in the extension and imposition of residential character and appearance into a rural area in the open countryside outside of the village with mixed farmland and woodland with individual isolated residential dwellings. The impact this would have on the character and appearance of the local area would not be fully mitigated by the proposed planting of trees and hedges on the boundary of the site, which the appellant has suggested as a potential screen to soften the impact of the proposed development on the landscape in wider views.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to a planning approval¹ for the development of 12 detached and semi-detached dwellings that will occupy the part of the same field as the proposed development. The development will, however, occupy a gap in the housing along Aldermaston Road, infilling that gap between existing residential development and forming part of a ribbon

¹ Planning Ref: 15/03029/OUT

development on both sides of the road. The rear gardens of this approved development will also form a continuation of the edge of the village and form a consistent boundary between the residential character of the village and the countryside beyond. I find that the infill nature of this approved development does not accord with the context of the proposed development or its impact that I have identified and, therefore, has little weight in my determination of the appeal that I have considered on its own individual merits.

10. For these reasons, I find that the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the local area contrary to Policies EM1 and EM10 of the LP that seeks to permit high quality development based on a clear understanding of local identity and context of development, and that are sympathetic to the character and visual qualities of the area concerned and would respect, enhance and not be detrimental to the character or visual amenity of the landscape likely to be affected.

The setting of the Grade II listed Pamber Place

11. Located nearby to the appeal site is the Grade II listed Pamber Place, a property of some age and historic value located in its own extensive gardens, paddocks and woodland, which along with the open fields, make up the rural area that forms its wider setting.
12. The Grade II listed buildings at Pamber Place and nearby barn are heritage assets to which I have a statutory duty under sections 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the P(LB&C) Act). I must have special regard to preserving the setting of a listed building.
13. Pamber Place faces across a lane onto fields that lead to the appeal site. It is set behind an early brick boundary wall and is associated with the barn building to its north. The openness of the setting of these buildings allows for a full appreciation of their architectural and historic value in their original setting. The proposal would be located in an open field that forms an important part of this setting, its development would, therefore, encroach on this openness. The proposed development would also introduce a concentrated and urban form of residential development and layout into this setting that does not reflect the nature of other more isolated dwellings in the countryside that form part of their existing setting, such as that found at Pamber Place Cottage.
14. The proposed development would, therefore not be a sympathetic and high quality form of development that would by encroachment on its setting and through its incongruous form impact on the setting of the listed Pamber Place, in a manner that would not be fully mitigated or softened by the proposed tree planting and landscaping suggested by the applicant as a screen.
15. The proposed development would, due to its incongruous form of layout and encroachment cause harm to the setting of Grade II listed Pamber Place. I therefore find that the proposed development would be contrary to Policy EM11 of the LP, which seeks to ensure that development has due regard to the importance of preserving or enhancing heritage assets.

16. Although I find the harm to the listed buildings would be considered less than substantial, in accordance with the Framework, great weight should be given to the conservation of this asset. I address the balance against public benefits in my conclusions below.

Other Considerations

17. Whilst the proposed development is within walking distance of reasonable bus routes for the purposes of local commuting and access to limited local services, the proposal would also be heavily reliant on the use of the car, which is clearly accommodated in the indicative layout and proposed access road. The proposal does not, therefore, commend itself as an exceptionally sustainable form of development in this regard and is a benefit of limited weight in favour of the proposed development.
18. The appellant has stated that the proposed would provide a public benefit by enhancing the rural community and economy. However, any economic benefit and community benefit from the development of 4 houses would not be significant within the context of a village of this scale.

Conclusion

19. In taking my decision in accordance with Paragraph 11 of the Framework, I have applied a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and as Policies SS1 and SS6 are out of date, have balanced this against the considerable importance and weight I must give to the conservation of heritage assets as set out in Paragraph 193 of the Framework and the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the local area.
20. I have found that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and I have given this significant weight. I have further found that the proposal would cause less than substantial harm to the setting of the Listed Buildings including Pamber Place and I have given great weight to this being contrary to the P(LB&C) Act. Overall, I consider that in accordance with Paragraph 11 d) i and ii, that the benefits of the proposal do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
21. For the reasons given above, and taking in to account all other matters, I consider that the appeal should be dismissed.

Victor Callister

INSPECTOR