
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2019

by J Gibson BUEP MPIA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/19/3230177

Land adjacent to Chandos Chase, Kiln Ride, Upper Basildon, Reading RG8 8TA

- 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 Mr Philip Lewis against the decision of West Berkshire Council.
 - The application Ref 18/02885/COMIND, dated 26 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 14 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is a new drive alignment and a relocated access on to Kiln Ride.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with specific regard to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is located within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires that I have regard to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB. Paragraph 172 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) specifies that great weight must be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty of these areas. The surrounding area can be described as having a rural character and appearance amongst a tranquil setting. More specifically, the predominant character along Kiln Ride is residential with the appeal property reflecting a woodland appearance along the frontage.
4. I observed that works for the proposed driveway had already commenced during my site visit. The alignment of the driveway had been dug out and significant clearing of woodland vegetation had occurred along the front boundary. Consequently, direct views to the residential dwelling could be seen from Kiln Ride. The loss of this vegetation represents a harmful departure from the landscape characteristics which the appeal property offered to the wider AONB. The introduction of the proposed driveway would compound this loss of landscape character and appearance by introducing associated residential activities and appearance within this part of the land.

5. The separation of vehicle movements from pedestrians on the Public Right of Way (Ref: BASI/2/1) has merits, as does reference to the existing residential character and appearance along Kiln Ride and the suitability of the existing driveway access. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm which the new driveway would have upon the landscape character and appearance of the appeal property and the wider AONB.
6. The appellant makes reference to a potential fallback to enclose the property with a gate and fence. Be that as it may, details of such an arrangement have not been provided, so I have in any event determined this appeal based on the evidence before me. I have found that harm to the AONB would arise. The presence of the water utility facility at the entrance of Kiln Ride does not justify the loss of the landscape character of the appeal property.
7. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with specific regard to the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It therefore conflicts with Policies ADPP5, CS14, CS17, CS18 and CS19 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy 2006-2026 (adopted July 2012) (CS), Policy C8 of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations Development Plan Document (adopted May 2017) (DPD) and Paragraphs 170 and 172 of the Framework. These policies, amongst other things, collectively seek to protect and enhance landscape characteristics which contribute towards the AONB and the rural character and appearance of the area.
8. The reason for refusal also makes reference to Policy ADPP1 of the West Berkshire CS which deals with the settlement hierarchy, and Policy C1 of the West Berkshire Housing Site Allocations DPD which deals with the location of new housing in the countryside. Neither of these policies are directly relevant to this appeal proposal.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

J Gibson

INSPECTOR