



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2019

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/19/3234122

4 New Road, Purton SN5 4HF

- 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 John Grisley against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03620/FUL, dated 4 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as '*proposed dwelling and garage with annex over*'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether or not the proposal would provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the accessibility of services and facilities;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the proposal would make adequate provision for surface water drainage; and,
 - the effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

Suitability of location

3. The appeal site comprises vacant land associated with No 4 New Road, which is a detached dwelling, adjacent to the east, within the appellant's control. Agricultural land is to the north, a residential property is to the west, and the site fronts New Road which runs along its south boundary. This highway, in turn, runs parallel to the mainline railway. Housing in the area is mixed in style and period. The proposal seeks to erect a two-storey dwelling with a detached garage with integral accommodation, with access from New Road.
4. Policies CP1 and CP2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015) (CS) set out the Council's strategic approach to its housing delivery, directing development to settlements and only permitting development in the countryside under certain circumstances. These are set out within Policy C48 of the CS and Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (adopted 2001) (NWLP).
5. The appellant holds the reasonable opinion that, as the site lies amongst housing on the outskirts of Purton, which is to the south, it falls within the

settlement. It is also held that the scheme would meet the tests for infill development set out within Policy CP2.

6. However, the extent of the settlement is defined in planning terms by its settlement boundary, which terminates on the opposite side of the railway. As such, for planning purposes the appeal site is within the countryside. It follows that the aforementioned tests set out within Policy CP2 do not apply to this case. On the evidence before me, the proposal would also not meet any of the circumstances set out within Policy C48 of the CS or Policy H4 of the NWLP.
7. Furthermore, the various services and facilities in the centre of Purton are a considerable distance of approximately 1km away. Access to them requires crossing the railway at the nearby road bridge, which is narrow, confined and bereft of dedicated footpaths or street lighting. Given these constraints, the route into the settlement would not provide a safe or appealing route for those on foot, particularly the elderly or people with children.
8. Reference is made to the No 53 bus service, which stops at the end of New Road before reaching Purton, but, on the Council's evidence, the frequency of this service is significantly limited. Employment providers are listed by the appellant, but it seems to me that all would require access by private motorcar. Consequently, occupants of the proposal would likely be dependent on private transport to access what is needed for day to day living.
9. I therefore find on this issue that the proposed development would not provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the accessibility of services and facilities. It would conflict with the relevant aims of Policies CP1, CP2, CP19, CP48, CP60 and CP61 of the CS, Policy H4 NWLP and the Framework.

Character and appearance

10. Although New Road is fronted by housing for a great deal of its length, its peripheral location in relation to Purton provides, overall, a rural and loose knit feel. This is particularly illustrated by the appeal site, which acts as a break in the otherwise near continuous built form north of the highway.
11. The proposed development would significantly reduce the strength of this gap as a feature in the street scene. In doing so, it would create a near unbroken ribbon of buildings stretching around 500m along New Road, diminishing the sporadic nature of housing development within the area. Although I acknowledge that the aesthetic design merits of the proposal would be compatible with the varietal style of housing within New Road, this would not overcome the harm I have identified through the loss of rurality in this location.
12. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the design aims of Policies CS51 and CS57 of the CS and the Framework.

Drainage

13. Although the appeal site falls within Flood Zone 1, it is part of an area around New Road identified in the Purton Neighbourhood Plan 2017 - 2026 (made 2018) (PNP) as prone to localised flooding, owing to Purton's placement on an escarpment and the consequent flowing of water on to the railway. This places a particular requirement to demonstrate that any flooding as a result of development in the area would be prevented.

14. The appellant seeks to discharge surface water through a soakaway. Given the evidence of flooding in the area, the Council's drainage engineer is concerned that ground conditions may preclude the effectiveness of this approach. This specialist advice attracts significant weight in my assessment. Whilst I note that the appellant has installed land drains at the site, there are no details before me as to how surface water would be attenuated prior to discharge, if this method were proposed. Furthermore, given the potential flooding issues, I am not persuaded that this matter could be resolved through a planning condition.
15. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would not make adequate provision for surface water drainage. It would therefore conflict with Purton Policy 7 of the PNP, Policy CP67 of the CS and the Framework.

Highway safety

16. New Road is long and straight. As it offers only access to the homes and businesses therein, it is logical to conclude that vehicular trips are relatively low in number and by and large made by people familiar with the residential character of the area.
17. The location of the proposed access would be at the east end of the site, at the centre of the land under the appellant's control. Taking into account the breadth of this land and the circumstances of the highway, it seems to me that suitable opportunity would be available to provide an adequate visibility splay.
18. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would have an acceptable effect on highway safety. It would accord with the relevant aims of Policy CP60 of the CS and the Framework.

Other Matters

19. The appellant has referred to a high demand for housing in this area. However, no local need has been established, and this matter has therefore carried very limited weight in favour of the scheme.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

20. The government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and the provision of a single dwelling would add to local supply and deliver social and economic benefits. However, these benefits would be modest and outweighed by the unsuitability of the location, the inaccessibility to services and facilities, and the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
21. I therefore find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no other considerations, including the Framework, which outweigh this conflict.
22. Taking all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR