



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2020

by Neil Pope BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/19/3239113

Land adjacent to Mill Cottages, Winterbourne Gunner, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6JQ.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Bruce-White against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref.19/03682/PIP, dated 9/4/19, was refused by notice dated 17/5/19.
 - The development proposed is residential development for 2 No. dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has informed me that following the submission of additional information relating to archaeology and transport, it is no longer pursuing its concerns regarding these matters.
3. The Council is unable to demonstrate five years' housing land supply (HLS) as required by the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). It estimates that it has between 4.3-4.8 years HLS.
4. The appeal site lies within the Winterbournes Conservation Area (WCA) and forms part of the settings of the grade II listed Winterbourne Gunner Mill (approximately 50 metres to the east) and the Manor House (approx. 100m to the south west). The provisions of sections 66(1) and 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 are engaged.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether any adverse impacts of the proposed development, with particular regard to the likely effect upon: the significance of the WCA and Winterbourne Gunner Mill and the Manor House; the character and appearance of the area and; planning policies that are aimed at limiting the need to travel would outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Reasons

Planning Policy

6. The development plan includes the Wiltshire Core Strategy (CS) adopted in 2015 and the 'saved' policies of the Salisbury District Local Plan (LP) adopted in

2013. The most relevant development plan policies to the determination of this appeal are CS policies 1, 2, 4, 51, 58, 61 and LP policy C6.

7. Under CS policy CP4 The Winterbournes are identified as a 'Large Village'. These are settlements with a limited range of services and facilities (CS policy 1) and where there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development within the limits of development¹, as defined on the policies map (CS policy 2). CS policy 61 requires new development to be located and designed to reduce the need to travel, particularly by private car.
8. Under CS policy 51 there is a requirement to protect the locally distinctive character of settlements and their landscape settings. I understand that the appeal site lies within a Special Landscape Area (SLA), where development is carefully controlled to conserve the character of the area (LP policy C6). CS policy 58 includes a requirement to conserve and enhance designated heritage assets and their settings in a manner appropriate to their significance.
9. I also understand that a Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared for this part of the district. However, this appears to be at an early stage and my attention has not been drawn to any relevant provisions. It is not determinative to the outcome of this appeal.

Benefits

10. The proposed development would help to address the shortfall in HLS within the district and occupiers of the proposed dwellings would help support and sustain local services and facilities, including the bus service. The development would increase the mix and choice of housing available within the area and during the build phase there would be limited support for the construction industry. There could also be some very modest net gains in biodiversity. I attach moderate weight to the totality of the public benefits of the proposals.

Impact upon the Significance of Designated Heritage Assets

11. The significance of the early 19th century two storey Winterbourne Gunner Mill and house is derived primarily from its architectural qualities, which include its brick walls, natural slate roof, Tuscan portico, windows and loading door, as well as its historic qualities, which include much of its fabric and associations with previous mill activities and operations in Winterbourne Gunner.
12. The appeal site forms part of the extended setting to the mill and the adjoining mill house and is within the same ownership. However, from the evidence before me, including my site visit, there is nothing to indicate that it contributes to the significance of this designated heritage asset. Provided the proposed dwellings were designed to a high standard and in keeping with the local vernacular, the location, use and amount of development proposed would not harm the significance of this listed building and would preserve its setting.
13. The significance of the early-mid 19th century two storey (with attics and cellars) Manor House is derived primarily from: its architectural qualities, which include its brickwork walls, hipped tiled roof, 'U'-plan, windows and chimney stacks and; its historic qualities, which include much of the building fabric and the role of this high status building within this part of the parish.

¹ The appeal site lies outside the settlement limits as defined on the policies map.

14. As I saw during my visit, there are views from the footway along the A338 across the appeal site and of the side and rear of the Manor House. There is nothing to indicate these are 'designed views' and they are not of the principal façade. Nevertheless, these views and the unspoilt open qualities of the site assist in affording an appreciation of the architectural attributes, historic landscape setting and the importance of this high status building. The site makes a small, but positive contribution to the significance of the Manor House.
15. The WCA is a sizeable area. It includes part of the settlements of Winterbourne Gunner, Winterbourne Dauntsey and Winterbourne Earls, as well as some of the surrounding meadows and fields. There does not appear to be any published conservation area appraisal. However, from everything that I have seen, the significance of the WCA is derived from: its special architectural qualities, which include the contribution made by the various listed buildings; its historic interest, which include the layout of plots and spaces around the buildings and; its archaeology.
16. As I noted during my visit, the appeal site forms part of the attractive countryside that surrounds the village and separates some of the buildings to create a pleasing, loose knit pattern of development towards the northern edge of Winterbourne Gunner. The appellant's Archaeological Evaluation report also identifies the presence of a possible curvilinear boundary ditch and nearby gully (possible Prehistoric date) in part of the site. The appeal site makes a very modest, but positive contribution to the significance of the WCA.
17. The proposed dwellings would be likely to considerably erode the unspoilt open qualities of the appeal site and interrupt views of the side and rear of the Manor House. These new buildings would also harmfully consolidate and disrupt the loose knit pattern of development within this part of the WCA. The proposal would detract from an appreciation and understanding of the significance of the Manor House and the special qualities of the WCA.
18. In the context of the Framework, the proposed development would comprise less than substantial harm to the heritage interest of the Manor House and the WCA. However, this does not amount to a less than substantial planning objection in the overall balance. I am required to give great weight to an asset's conservation. The harm that I have identified would not be outweighed by the public benefits and the proposal would conflict with CS policy 58.

Character and Appearance

19. Even if the proposed dwellings were designed to a high quality and were finished using materials that are sympathetic to local building traditions, the development of this 0.15 ha site would have a marked effect upon the character of this part of the settlement. The loss of this paddock and its rural qualities² would detract from the established and pleasing pattern of settlement, with buildings separated by pockets of countryside.
20. A few parts of the settlement boundary, as identified in the policies map, do not accurately reflect the existing built environment and are now somewhat out-of-date. However, there has been no material change in the vicinity of the appeal site to indicate, on the ground, or to suggest that in the future, the site should no longer be treated as forming part of the surrounding countryside.

² Unspoilt, green open attributes.

21. The proposed development would erode the character of the area and the landscape setting of the village. It would conflict with the provisions of CS policy 51 and LP policy C6.

Need to Travel

22. Although occupiers of the proposed dwellings would have convenient access to a local bus service and could walk or cycle to some other services and facilities, the proposal would involve a very modest increase in the need to travel by car. However, this would be the same if the proposed dwellings were built slightly further to the south east and within the limits of the settlement. Whilst the site's location outside the settlement means that the presumption in favour of sustainable development to which CS policy 2 relates would not apply, the proposal would not frustrate or undermine the objectives of CS policy 61.

Other Matters

23. The appeal site is in close proximity to the River Bourne. Whilst the parking area to the neighbouring Mill Cottages is located within Flood Zone 3 (high risk of flooding) as identified on maps prepared for the Environment Agency, it appears that the appeal site, including the proposed access, is within Flood Zone 1 (low risk of flooding). There is nothing to demonstrate that occupiers of the proposed dwellings would be at undue risk of flooding or that the development would increase the risk of flooding elsewhere.

Planning Balance / Overall Conclusion

24. When all of the above is put into the planning balance, I find that the adverse impacts of the proposed development (the harm to the significance of the WCA and the listed Manor House, as well as the harm to the character of the area) would more than outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
25. I have found that the proposal would not offend some aspects of the development but would conflict with other policies. When the development plan is considered overall, the proposal would be at odds with the objective of accommodating necessary growth whilst safeguarding environmental quality.
26. Given all of the above, I conclude that the appeal should not succeed.

Neil Pope

Inspector