



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2019

by S Thomas BSc (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/19/3227479

West View Farm, Baughurst Road, Baughurst, Hampshire RG26 5LL

- 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 & Mrs Giles against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/03128/FUL, dated 23 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is Erection of 1no. New Dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (i) whether the site is a suitable location for housing having regard to the development plan and any relevant national policies; and (ii) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Suitable location for housing

3. The appeal site is located to the southern end of the village of Baughurst and within the grounds of West View Farm. The site is separated from the existing dwelling and is adjacent to equestrian buildings. It is accessed via a private drive from Baughurst Road which leads to West View Farm with the appeal site located to the south west of the existing dwelling. The site is situated outside the Settlement Policy Boundary of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (Local Plan) (2016) and as such for the purposes of Policy SS1 lies in the countryside.
4. Policy SS6 of the Local Plan states that new dwellings in the countryside will only be permitted where they satisfy one of a number of criteria. Of relevance to this proposal are Criterion a) where the proposal is on previously developed land and Criterion e) is small scale to meet a locally agreed need. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) defines previously developed land as land which is or was occupied by a permanent structure, including the curtilage of the developed land (although it should not be assumed that the whole of the curtilage should be developed).
5. The proposed dwelling would be sited on part of an existing paddock which is bounded by a wooden fence. Located adjacent to the paddock are

stables/barns and a gravelled riding arena is located to the north east. Whilst the paddock is not occupied by a permanent structure, it lies within the curtilage of the stables/barn and together with the riding arena, all form part of the same equestrian use. Whilst the paddock is fenced this is to ensure the horses can be exercised safely. Accordingly, whilst recognising the fact that the whole of the curtilage should not necessarily be developed, I find the paddock to be within the curtilage of the barns/stable and in this circumstance can be considered as Previously Developed Land.

6. Notwithstanding this, a proposal would still need to satisfy the rest of the sub criteria under this criterion a). Whilst the site is not isolated or of high environmental value, in respect of sub criterion iii) for the reasons set out below I find that the proposal would not be consistent with the policy as a whole. The site forms part of a paddock adjacent to stable/barns and thus is of rural character. The immediate context is one of equestrian uses. The existing dwelling is some distance away and the proposed dwelling would jar with the surrounding context intruding into this open area. The use and scale of the residential use would be unrelated to the context and pattern of the surrounding built form. Consequently, the proposal would not satisfy criterion a).
7. In respect of criterion e) small scale proposals are supported where they meet a locally agreed need and satisfy other criteria. On the basis of the evidence before me there is nothing to demonstrate the proposed dwelling would meet a locally agreed need and thus be allowed for under the exception within this policy. Further, even if need was proven such schemes would need to meet other criterion relating to impact on landscape and the character of the area. For the reasons set out in this decision I do not consider the proposal would respect the qualities of the local landscape and would fail to be sympathetic to the rural character of the area.
8. Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, I do not find the proposal can be considered as an exception under Policy SS6 of the Local Plan and would be in conflict with it. Consequently, it would also be in conflict with Local Plan Policy SS1.

Character and Appearance

9. The character of development along Baughurst Road follows a general linear pattern. However, I acknowledge there are existing properties that depart from the linear pattern which are set back and served by private drives. The paddock is surrounded by open fields with the stable buildings close by. Given the surroundings it is of rural character and the openness contributes to this character.
10. Whilst the dwelling would be positioned adjacent to existing development in the form of the stables, given the equestrian uses and fields adjacent to it, the introduction of a dwelling would appear out of context in this rural setting. The significant set back from the road and its positioning would appear unrelated to the general linear settlement pattern. The proposal would appear as a sporadic and fragmented form of development unrelated to existing residential uses and would reduce the feeling of openness in the area. It would therefore fail to integrate effectively with its surroundings and would detract from the rural character of the area.

11. The proposed dwelling and associated domestic paraphernalia would be visible from surrounding public rights of way to the north and west and would appear visually intrusive into this rural setting. Whilst views of stables, paddocks and dwellings might be common from footpaths, this does not alter my view that the proposed location of the dwelling in this paddock given the surroundings would be harmful to the character of the area.
12. I have considered the appellants point that a large replacement dwelling was granted planning permission at Manor House Farm to the south east of the appeal site which departs from the linear built form. I also acknowledge the subsequent planning permission granted to retain the existing dwelling. However, I do not have the full details of the case before me nor the planning circumstances which informed the decision. However, this does not appear to extend as far west into the countryside as the proposal would. Nevertheless, I have in any event determined this appeal on its own merits and on the basis of the evidence before me.
13. For the reasons outlined above, the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Thus, the proposal would conflict with Policy EM1 of the Local Plan. Amongst other matters this policy seeks that development proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area.

Planning balance

14. The Council state in their officer report, that they can demonstrate a Housing Land Supply of 5.3 years (as of December 2018). The appellant states in their final comments that the Council is now unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites with reference to a recent appeal decision¹ where the Council withdrew their reason for refusal on this basis. However, I have not been provided with a copy of this decision nor an indication of how the housing land supply has changed, or the nature of any suggested shortfall. Whilst I acknowledge that the proposal would contribute to the areas housing stock, the proposal would provide only one additional dwelling. Accordingly, any benefits that might be associated with it would be very modest and must be set against the conflict with the Council's strategy for the location of housing and the high level of harm I have found to the area's character and appearance. I attach very significant weight to these conflicts and find no justification for taking a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons above, the appeal is dismissed.

S Thomas

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/H1705/W/19/3229507