
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 May 2020

by **L McKay MA MRTPI**

Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th June 2020.

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/W/19/3238621

Shrover Lodge, Anmore Lane, Horndean, Waterlooville PO7 6HN

- 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 Ms Donna Maplesden against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 34869/016, dated 19 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is temporary stationing of two storage containers for 3 years.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. I have also dealt with another appeal (Ref: APP/M1710/W/20/3246512) on this site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision.
3. I saw at my site visit that there were two containers sited in the positions shown on the submitted plan, with a timber frame spanning the gap between the two and earth banked up against the side of one of the containers. I am satisfied that what I saw on site accords with the submitted plan and have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that the development proposed has already been carried out.

Application for costs

4. An application for costs was made by Ms Donna Maplesden against East Hampshire District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are whether there is a genuine and proven need for the development in this countryside location; and the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Location

6. The appeal site is outside of any settlement boundary and as such is in the countryside as defined by Policy CP19 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014 (CS). That Policy seeks to protect the countryside for its own sake and therefore allows development only where there is a genuine and proven need for a countryside location. The Policy gives farming, forestry or other

rural enterprises as examples, but does not preclude other types of development if there is a need.

7. The appeal site forms part of a larger field adjacent to the garden of Shrover Lodge and in the same ownership. While the appellant is not seeking to make the case that the site forms part of the residential curtilage of Shrover Lodge, they nonetheless consider that it is associated with the dwelling, its garden and the wider field. The field is surrounded by hedges and mature trees, and at the time of my site visit was closely mown, with 16 beehives located along the boundaries. The containers are used for storage of garden machinery and building materials and equipment left over from renovation of Shrover Lodge as well as for equipment and machinery for tree and branch cutting, mowing and beekeeping. It is therefore apparent that they are used for storage of domestic items as well as those associated with the maintenance of the field and beehives.
8. Given the size of the field and the number of beehives, it is reasonable to expect that some machinery and equipment is required to maintain the land and for bee-keeping, and that this needs to be stored. However, there are already several sizeable outbuildings associated with Shrover Lodge close to the appeal site, and it has not been demonstrated that these cannot meet the appellant's storage needs.
9. Even if the site and wider field are not part of the same planning unit as Shrover Lodge, as the Council contends, it has not been demonstrated that two containers of this size are needed to store the items required just for beekeeping and maintenance of the field. Nor is there any compelling evidence before me that there is any need to store domestic items in a field. Consequently, whether the site is part of the same planning unit as Shrover Lodge or not, a need for two storage containers in this location has not been demonstrated.
10. Although the appellant is seeking temporary permission, they have not explained their reasoning for this. It is therefore unclear whether the appellant would no longer have a need for storage at the end of the 3 years for which permission is sought, or if alternative arrangements would be made to meet any storage needs. Therefore, no need has been demonstrated for additional storage even on a temporary basis.
11. Accordingly, while the current arrangements may be convenient for the appellant, there is no compelling evidence before me that there is a genuine and proven need for the development in this countryside location. Therefore, the development conflicts with CS Policy CP19.

Character and appearance

12. Anmore Lane is enclosed by mature hedges and trees, with gaps providing views out to the surrounding fields. The few scattered houses and other buildings are generally set well back from the road and largely screened by vegetation. Consequently, the area has a verdant and largely undeveloped rural character, which is distinctly different to the closer-knit, suburban character of nearby settlements.
13. At the time of my site visit parts of the containers were visible from the road through a gap between the boundary hedge and a row of conifers, even though the hedge and trees around the appeal site and wider field were in full leaf. The containers would therefore be more visible when the surrounding vegetation is not in leaf. From this viewpoint neither Shrover Lodge, its outbuildings or other existing structures are visible. Seen in this context, despite their dark colour, the utilitarian appearance and somewhat reflective metal exterior of the containers stand out as an alien and incongruous feature in a field otherwise devoid of such

structures. As a result, the development adversely affects the appearance of this part of the lane and does not achieve the exemplary standard of design and high-quality external appearance required by CS Policy CP29.

14. Consequently, the development results in modest harm to the character and appearance of the immediate area. As the proposal is for temporary siting of the containers, rather than permanent buildings, the harm would be of limited duration and reversible at the end of the permission. Therefore overall, the degree of harm would be minor. Nevertheless, as there would still be some degree of harm even on a temporary basis, the development does not make a positive contribution to the overall appearance of the area, and therefore conflicts with CS Policy CP29.
15. It also conflicts with Paragraph 170b) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which requires development to contribute to or enhance the local environment by recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and which applies to all countryside, not just National Parks or areas with special designations.
16. From wider viewpoints along the lane and the access track to Shrover Lodge, the existing hedges and fencing largely screen the containers from view. Their visual impact is therefore limited to the immediate environs of the site and part of the lane. As such, the development does not materially harm the verdant, rural character of the wider landscape. Therefore, there is no conflict with CS Policy CP20 which seeks to conserve and enhance the special characteristics of the district's natural environment.

Other Matters

17. The siting of the containers in the appellant's preferred location and their enjoyment of their land are private benefits which can be afforded very little weight. Keeping bees has benefits for the natural environment however it has not been demonstrated that the beekeeping activities would not continue without these containers. As such this carries very limited weight and does not outweigh the harm identified above.
18. The development would not adversely affect the living conditions of neighbours, suitable access is provided and there is no substantive evidence before me that the development has impacted on the nearby trees, or on protected species. These are however neutral impacts which do not weigh in favour of the development.
19. Although the appellant raises concern about the precision of the Council's reasons, I have been able to understand the Council's case and identify the main issues for this appeal from the decision and the other appeal submissions.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, the development conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole. Overall, taking account of the Framework and the above considerations, including the benefits of the development, I conclude that there are no material considerations that would indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L McKay

INSPECTOR