

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2022

by S Edwards BA MA TCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/22/3303496

South Lea, Tytherley Road, Winterslow, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP5 1PZ

- 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 Alvar Shears against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2021/11289, dated 25 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is change of use from agricultural to E(g)(iii) light industrial (formerly B1).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The description of the proposal has been amended in subsequent documents. I have adopted the description included in the Council's Decision Notice, which reflects the changes introduced by the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would be suitably located, having regard to national and local planning policies which seek to restrict development in the countryside, and the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Core Policies 1 and 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (CS) – Adopted January 2015 set out the settlement and delivery strategies for the area administered by the Council. They establish a settlement hierarchy to ensure that development is delivered in a sustainable manner, in the most accessible parts of the county.
5. The appeal site comprises a small parcel of land sited outside the settlement boundary of Winterslow, which Core Policy CS23 of the Wiltshire CS defines as a Large Village, where development is limited to that needed to help meet the housing needs of settlements and to improve employment opportunities, services and facilities. Being located outside the defined limits of development, the site is not considered suitable for development, other than in circumstances permitted by other policies, which are listed in paragraph 4.25 of the Wiltshire CS. These exceptions include additional employment land.

6. Core Policy 34 of the Wiltshire CS sets out the circumstances in which additional employment land will be supported on sites within or adjacent to Large and Small Villages. However, other than suggesting that the site would lend itself to small industrial activity, very limited information has been provided by the appellant regarding the nature of the proposed light industrial use, explaining how the existing infrastructure could accommodate the development and demonstrating how it would accord with the requirements of Core Policy 34.
7. Furthermore, no information has been included in respect of the level of employment which would be generated by the proposed development. The appellant's statement of case indicates that the lack of employment in the village means that car journeys to and from work have increased substantially, but this is not supported by detailed evidence. Furthermore, there is no certainty that employees would necessarily reside within or near the village.
8. It is likely that some or all the employees would have to commute from further afield using private motor vehicles, as there is no suggestion that the site is well served by public transport. There are no footpath or cycle path within proximity to the site, and the road is relatively narrow, with grass verges either side. In these circumstances, walking and cycling are unlikely to represent attractive alternatives to the private car. By virtue of its location away from larger centres, there is a real possibility that the development would encourage and exacerbate unsustainable travel patterns.
9. The appeal site is largely grassed and its undeveloped nature, together with the established vegetation along the edges of the plot and woodland areas beyond, give the locality a pleasant rural feel. Though no details have been submitted in that respect, the changes required to enable the proposed industrial use to operate would inevitably urbanise and harmfully change the character of the site, which as a result would erode the contribution that it presently makes to its rural surroundings.
10. Both parties have referred to an existing access which, I understand was approved as part of a planning application granted in 2002¹, but is located outside the appeal site. I also note that the consultation response provided by the Local Highway Authority stresses that the access was never completed. If the appellant intends to use this access as part of the proposal, it remains unclear why it has not been included within the red line delineating the extent of the site which, as confirmed by the national Planning Practice Guidance, should include all land necessary to carry out the proposed development. Even if I were to accept that this access is on land within the appellant's control, the changes which would be required as part of the development, notably to secure appropriate visibility, are likely to necessitate the removal of vegetation and cause further visual harm to the area.
11. The appellant has drawn my attention to a development located within proximity to the appeal site which has been recently approved by the Council. This relates to the construction of a residential scheme on the periphery of the village. However, on the basis of the presented evidence, I cannot see how a direct parallel can be drawn between this particular development and the proposal before me which, in any event, I am required to assess on its individual merits.

¹ Local Planning Authority Reference S/2002/1481.

12. Given the above, I find that the appeal site would not constitute a suitable location for the development, having particular regard to the Council's spatial strategy and national policy, but also the effect that the change of use would have on the character of the area. The appeal scheme would therefore conflict with Core Policies 1, 2, 34, 51 and 57 of the Wiltshire CS, which notably seek to ensure that proposals meet sustainable development objectives set out in the policies and do not adversely affect the surrounding area.

Conclusion

13. There are no material considerations, which indicate that the appeal should be determined, other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR