



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2023

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 February 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/22/3302809

Station Road, Cliddesden RG25 2FG,

- 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 T Coles against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/02118/FUL, dated 23 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 28 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of a single detached one and a half storey dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. There is extant planning permission for an additional dwelling adjoining No. 1 Millars Cottages. The dwelling has been constructed (referred to hereon as No. 1A Millars Cottages), however the permitted parking area and associated landscaping have not yet been implemented. The Proposed Site Plan, ref: A-102, was updated during the application process to show No. 1A Millars Cottage and the adjacent parking area that serves Millars Cottages. As part of the updated Site Plan, amendments were proposed to the permitted parking area and landscaping as they would overlap with the proposed parking and access for the appeal proposal. It is important to note that while the relationship between the approved scheme and the scheme before me is a material consideration, my determination relates only to the development proposed within the appeal site and not to any parking proposals on adjoining land.
3. During the appeal process another plan has been submitted, labelled as Fig 3, which further amends the arrangement of the adjacent parking area. I understand that this plan was prepared to demonstrate that the permitted parking arrangement could be amended so that the required number of parking spaces could be accommodated within land that is within the ownership and control of the appellant. However, this plan has not been consulted on. The changes proposed could affect some local people and comments received from interested parties indicate that car parking is a matter of interest for local residents. In any event, as noted above, the parking on the neighbouring land is not before me. Therefore, while I have had regard to the revised plan, I shall determine the appeal on the basis of the plans that were before the Council during the application process.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:

- Character and appearance of the area; and
- Highway safety

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. I understand that the appeal site was previously screened by hedgerow and substantial trees and plants, including some leylandii trees, which were removed prior to the application being made. Nevertheless, it currently has an open frontage and is visible from Station Road. Although there is a metal container on the site, the remainder is open and there are views through the site to the paddocks behind and countryside beyond. This gives the area an open, verdant, and rural character.
6. While the proposed dwelling would have a similar form to the adjacent commercial building, it would be wider and significantly taller. It would also be significantly greater in scale than the modest two storey dwellings that make up Millars Cottages. It would sit within what is currently an open gap between built form and would significantly restrict existing views of the wider countryside setting. As a result, it would harm the open rural character of the area. Although the site may have previously been used for car parking, the temporary nature and low profile of most vehicles means any harm would have been more limited than the proposal.
7. The proposed materials are stone and larch cladding and a raised metal seam roof system. These materials are different to the neighbouring cottages, which consist of red brick, as well as other dwellings in the wider area, which consist predominantly of red brick, render and hanging tiles. It would also have a very different pattern of fenestration on its front elevation. Although the adjacent commercial building uses wooden cladding on its side elevations, most of the cladding is dark and appears subservient to the building's principal red brick façade. This would not be similar to the proposed dwelling, where the proposed larch cladding would be much lighter in colour and would wrap around the building, including half of its front elevation.
8. I understand that the proposal has been designed to represent a transition from the adjacent commercial building to the adjacent cottages. However, given it would be larger than the neighbouring buildings, use different materials and would have a different pattern of fenestration, it would not sit comfortably with either and would appear incongruous and dominant in the street scene.
9. The proposal does not include any planting to soften the proposed hardstanding to the front of the dwelling, which is not in keeping with the wider area where most of the built form is offset by greenery. The majority of the site is laid to hardstanding, and I acknowledge that, in the absence of the permitted landscaping relating to the adjacent parking area, the immediate surroundings are currently open and relatively stark. However, they are softened by the views of the open and verdant countryside beyond, which would be significantly restricted by the proposal.

10. It has been put to me that any harm to the rural landscape and its surroundings could be addressed by a full landscaping scheme secured by condition. While this may help to soften the proposed dwelling and allow it to integrate better with its surroundings, it would not address the fundamental harm resulting from the loss of openness and views of the wider countryside, which make an important contribution to the rural character of the area.
11. For the reasons above, the proposed dwelling would significantly harm the rural character of the area. The proposal would conflict with Policies EM1 and EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2016) (Local Plan), the Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2018) and the Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document (2018). These, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development contributes to the character and visual amenity of the area and responds positively to the local context. It would also conflict with the aims of sections 12 and 15 of the Framework to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places that are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, and that recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Highway Safety

12. As referred to above, the appeal site overlaps with an extant permission that has been partly implemented. While the permitted parking arrangement and associated landscaping have not yet been incorporated, they are included within the full scope of the permitted development and required by condition. Some of the permitted parking spaces and associated landscaping would be positioned in the same location as the access and parking spaces that would serve the proposal. It would, therefore, not be possible to provide the proposed access and parking spaces when having regard to that which is authorised to be done under the extant permission.
13. Notwithstanding this, the updated Site Plan, ref: A-102, shows an amended arrangement for the parking area that takes account of the proposal and would allow for the proposed access and parking spaces. However, it is evident that this is not an approved scheme. While the appellant regards it as satisfactory, that is not a matter for me to determine. Thus, on the evidence before me, and given that the house on the neighbouring land has already been built, it appears that the overlapping land will be required to provide the approved parking scheme. Since there is no dispute that car parking is needed for both the proposed and existing dwellings, the incompatibility of the schemes leads me to conclude that the parking proposals are inadequate.
14. Station Road is a narrow country lane and the Millars Cottages are positioned on a bend in the road that restricts visibility. Given this, although vehicle movements are limited, any increase in on-street parking in this location would compromise highway safety.
15. I recognise that the Highway Authority did not raise an objection to the proposal referring the Council instead to their standing advice. However, this appears to be based on the small scale of the scheme rather than to any positive assessment that it was satisfactory. Consequently, given my concerns regarding the parking proposed, the lack of an objection in this regard does not equate to a lack of harm. In the absence of a satisfactory scheme for parking, my concerns could not be addressed with a planning condition.

16. Therefore, it has not been demonstrated that adequate and safe off-street parking could be provided. The absence of adequate and safe off-street parking in this location would compromise highway safety. It would conflict with Policy CN9 of the Local Plan that seeks to ensure that development proposals provide appropriate parking and do not compromise highway safety.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

17. At the current time the Council is unable to identify a five-year supply of specific deliverable sites to meet housing needs. The Council's current five-year land supply figure is between 4.3 and 4.6 years, which shows there to be a moderate shortfall in supply. Given this, paragraph 11d) of the Framework falls to be considered. In this case, planning permission should be withheld only where the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
18. I have found that the proposal would result in significant harm to the rural character of the area and would compromise highway safety. The proposal would conflict with policies EM1 and EM10 of the Local Plan. These are broadly consistent with the Framework's aim to create high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places that are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, and that recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. It would also conflict with Policy CN9 of the Local Plan, which is broadly consistent with the Framework's aim to ensure development would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
19. Whether or not some or all the site is previously developed land, I consider that delivery of housing in this location is beneficial and not contrary to the Framework. The proposal would provide a dwelling that would contribute towards the borough's housing supply and the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of new homes. Given the current shortfall in the housing land supply I attach significant weight to the benefit of the additional house that would be provided.
20. Nevertheless, the harm to the rural character of the area and highway safety is such that, when the proposal is assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits. The proposal would not therefore benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
21. For the reasons above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole and all relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Hannah Guest

INSPECTOR