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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2024

**by Rebecca McAndrew, BA Hons, MSc, PG Dip Urban Design, MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 4 April 2024.**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/23/3324298**

**Hillside House, Ashford Hill Road, Headley, Hampshire RG19 8AJ**

- 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 Guy Brown against the decision of Basingstoke and Dean Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 22/02209/FUL, dated 5 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2023.
  - The development proposed is the erection of 2 no. Five-bed dwellings with associated landscaping.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Procedural Matters

2. I have taken the description of development in the banner above from the Council's decision notice as it is more accurate than that included in the planning application form.
3. During the appeal, a new version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) came into effect. Additionally, the Council commenced its Regulation 18 consultation, in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 on the Local Plan Update. The Council and the appellant have commented on these updates, and I have taken these into account in my decision. I am satisfied no party would be prejudiced by determining the appeal accordingly.

## Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and area.

## Reasons

5. Ashford Hill Road is characterised by a linear development pattern which gradually transitions from more modest properties in smaller plots, close to the junction with Thornfield Road, to a less dense form of development as you travel eastwards. The locality of the appeal site is characterised by large dwellings in spacious plots. I acknowledge that there is a further cluster of

properties to the east on Ashford Hill Road with varying plot widths and sizes. However, these homes do not form part of the context of the appeal site as they are located a good distance away.

6. The appeal proposes the subdivision of the appeal site and the construction of two large properties, with limited space retained between them and to each side boundary. Whilst the dwellings would be a similar size to nearby properties and would largely respect the existing building line, due to the limited space around them, they would not respond to the established development pattern. The dwellings would be set back from the road and set down below the road level, which would to a certain extent help reduce their impact on the street scene. However, the properties would still be visible from the highway to the front of the site and they would appear cramped within their plots. As such, the development would be incongruous and would not integrate well into street scene.
7. I recognise that the proposed dwellings would respond to the design and materials of local properties. Whereas, nearby The Willows and Cedar House, are both contemporary designs which vary from the traditional form and materials of other properties on Ashford Hill Road. However, unlike the proposed dwellings, they retain a good level of space between their eastern elevations and their side boundaries and therefore do not appear cramped. As such, the site circumstances of those properties vary from the appeal proposal. In any event, each development must be considered on its own merits.
8. I conclude that the proposed development would unduly harm the character and appearance of this part of Ashford Hill Road. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies EM1 and EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 – 2029 (2016) (LP), and Policies HD1 and HD3 of the Ashford Hill and Headley Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2029 (2022). Taken together, these require high quality development which promotes local distinctiveness and is sensitive to the character and appearance of the site and area.
9. It would also conflict with Chapter 12 of the Framework which seeks to ensure that developments are visually attractive and sympathetic to local character.

### **Other matters**

10. I have taken into account a number of matters which the appellant has raised in support of the proposals. The proposed development would provide social, economic and environmental benefits. These include the contribution of two additional properties to local housing supply, the creation of construction jobs and increased local spending to support the local economy and services. I also acknowledge that the proposal would secure a substantial Community Infrastructure Levy contribution, which would be of local benefit. I note the appellant's comments in relation to the need for 4+ bedroom properties, rather than smaller dwellings in the area. Environmental benefits would include proposed landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. However, given the limited scale of the appeal scheme any benefits, considered on their own or cumulatively, would be minimal. These matters therefore carry neutral weight in support of the proposals.

### **Planning Balance and Conclusion**

11. Both the Council and the appellant agree that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, in line with the Framework. As the Local Plan Update has reached the Regulation 18 stage, for decision-taking purposes, the Framework requires the Council to identify and update a supply of housing for a minimum of four years. The Planning Policy Guidance confirms that the four years of supply should be assessed against the five-year calculation.
12. The Council's latest housing land supply position confirms a 4.6-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The appellant disputes this, explaining that an Inspector recently concluded that the housing supply position was 4.06 years (Appeal Reference: APP/H1705/W/23/3326191). Either way, the housing land supply is over four years and therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.
13. I conclude that the proposed development conflicts with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, including the Framework, that indicate that the appeal scheme should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
14. For the reasons identified above, and having regard to all relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Rebecca McAndrew*

INSPECTOR