



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 October 2024

by B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th October 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/24/3337812

Land At OS 460960 158527, Ramsdell Road, Pamber End, Hampshire RG26 5QS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Saffery Champness Trust Corporation against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02588/PIP.
 - The development proposed is the development of one residential dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have removed wording that does not describe an act of development from the description above.
3. The proposal is for permission in principle. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second, 'technical details consent' stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
4. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent TDC application if permission in principle is granted. The Council's reason for refusal relates to character and appearance.
5. Whilst not a reason for refusal, the Council's delegated report and statement of case also raises specific issue with the countryside location and land use of the development. This is due to the changing circumstances regarding the Council's housing land supply position and subsequent weight to be given to spatial strategy and development within the countryside policies, in particular Policies SS1 and SS6 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029) (2016) (LP). The appellant questions the Council housing land supply, however as I set out below, based on the evidence before me, I conclude that there is no definitive evidence before me to contradict the Council's position.
6. The fact that the Local Plan is more than 5 years old does not mean that the policies in it are automatically out-of-date. It is necessary to give them due weight according to their degree of consistency with the Framework and

whether they are delivering the necessary amount of housing development. Given that, as set out below, the Council is now meeting the requirements of the Framework in this regard, it follows that the spatial strategy in the Local Plan is effective and Policies SS1 and SS6 are not out-of-date. Accordingly, I therefore give them full weight.

7. The Government published in December 2023 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The Council and the appellant have referenced this document within their appeal statements and as such I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by my also making reference to the Framework in this decision.

Main Issues

8. The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development, with specific regard to the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

Location

9. The appeal site lies to the west of a row of detached dwellings lining the north of Ramsdell Road, and forms part of a larger agricultural field. Ramsdell Road and the connecting Aldermaston Road are part of the settlement of Pamber End. Pamber End does not have a settlement boundary, and therefore for the purposes of planning policy, the site is located within the open countryside.
10. LP Policy SS1 relates to the scale and distribution of housing and sets out that the ways the Borough will be provided with new dwellings. This includes (f), permitting exception sites outside of defined settlement boundaries where it meets the criteria set out in other policies in the plan, or it is essential for the proposal to be located in the countryside.
11. LP Policy SS6 specifically relates to new housing in the countryside and sets out circumstances where such development would be permitted. Criteria e) allows for small scale (four dwellings or fewer) residential proposals '*of a scale and type that meet a locally agreed need*', subject to other requirements. The proposal would not meet any other criteria. The intention of the policy is to maintain the existing open nature of the borough's countryside, prevent the coalescence of settlements and resist the encroachment of development into rural areas. However, the policy is intended to incorporate sufficient flexibility to support the provision of new homes where they will enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities and meet identified needs.
12. The supporting text of the to the policy sets out that local need should be agreed in consultation with the parish/town council. No information has been submitted in this regard, and therefore it has not been demonstrated that the proposal would meet a locally identified need. As such, the proposal would therefore not meet the requirements of LP Policy SS6.
13. I conclude therefore that the appeal site is not suitably located for the proposal as it would undermine the strategic objectives of the development plan and would conflict with the sustainable development principles and plan-led approach endorsed by the Framework.

Character and appearance

14. Ramsdell Road extends out from the settlement and the appeal site is located on its northern side. The road transitions from a residential area out towards open countryside, and from open grassed verge fronting the dwellings to tree lined rural lane. The large field which the appeal site is part of is mostly open. Whilst it is self-contained with residential development on two sides and electricity pylon in the centre and is therefore limited in scenic quality, it does provide a mostly undeveloped edge to the settlement. However, I observed that a number of properties were being constructed¹ in the northeast side of the field. Whilst these dwellings infill between two rows of existing dwellings, they reduce the scale of the undeveloped open space.
15. Nevertheless, the proposal would extend built form out from the settlement. However, given the limited scale of development, it would sit comfortably next to the existing row of properties, and whilst the removal of some roadside landscaping may be necessary, this would not harm the verdant nature of the road as it extends out of the settlement. The development would be read as a minor, logical addition to the existing linear street scene and would sit comfortably in this existing context. The limited extension of built form into the large open field would not compromise its current open character, scenic quality and contribution to the setting of the settlement.
16. Reference is made to a previous appeal decision on this site², in which the Inspector concluded that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the local area. However, that scheme was for 4 dwellings set off a new access road adjacent to the existing highway. The Inspector refers to the scale of the development resulting in an imposition of residential character and appearance into a rural area. For the reasons set out above, I do not consider this to be the case for the proposal before me.
17. I conclude therefore that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area. There is therefore no conflict with LP Policies EM1 and EM10, which seek to ensure that development proposals must respect, enhance, and positively contribute to local distinctiveness and character. There is also no conflict with the general protection of landscape and high-quality sustainable development advice set out in the Supplementary Planning Documents 'Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees' (2018) and 'Design and Sustainability' (2018). The proposal would also not conflict with the protection of landscape goals of the Framework.

Setting of Listed Buildings

18. Located nearby to the appeal site is the Grade II listed Pamber Place House, and Pamber Place Barn and stables are also Grade II Listed. The significance of the red English bond brick two storey Pamber Place House is in part derived its special architectural and historic interest. The listing description notes that it dates back to the 17th Century, with tile roof, brick dentil verge and second-floor band to south. The north side gable a stone plaque with raised characters.
19. The barn and stable north of the house are 17th and 18th century and their significance, insofar as it relates to this appeal, includes their architectural qualities.

¹ 13 dwellings approved under application reference 21/01720/FUL

² Appeal reference APP/H1705/W/19/3226545

20. The property is located in its own extensive gardens, paddocks and woodland, which along with the open fields, make up the rural area that forms its wider setting. It faces across a lane onto fields that lead to the appeal site. The openness of the setting of these buildings allows for a full appreciation of their architectural and historic value in their original setting.
21. Whilst visible from the Pamber Place House, the proposed dwelling would reflect the existing pattern of development along Ramsdell Road and would be seen in this context. Given the limited scale of the proposal and the substantial distance from the western side of the field, the openness of the setting would not be compromised.
22. I am therefore satisfied that the proposal would not erode any of the elements which contribute positively to the special interest and significance of Pamber Place House, including the barn and stables. The proposal would not detract from the setting of the listed buildings or the ability to appreciate and understand them. The proposed development would therefore preserve the setting of the listed buildings and cause no harm to the significance of these, or indeed any other heritage assets. Accordingly, I find that their significance would be preserved, in accordance with Section 66(1) of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.

Other Matters and Planning Balance

23. There is some dispute between the parties as to whether the Council can demonstrate an appropriate housing land supply. Both parties are agreed that, as a result of the December 2023 changes to the Framework, there is now a need in Basingstoke and Dean Borough for a 4 year supply of housing, in view of the Local Plan Review having reached Regulation 19 stage and being inclusive of a policies map and proposed allocations towards meeting housing need.
24. The shortfall identified by the Inspector for the appeal at Watermill Bridge³ is being challenged by the Council and pre-date the Council's example. Whilst the appellant disputes that the Council have sufficient evidence to establish it has over 4 years supply, the recent appeal decision⁴ provided by the Council goes to some detail in determining this position, and this is set out in the submitted housing land supply statement. The Inspector set out clearly why they disagreed with the conclusions of the above appeal decision in relation to LP Policies SS1 and SS6. The Inspector also considered that the delivery on two sites referenced by the appellant had not progressed as predicted; and therefore, their contribution to the supply was removed/reduced. The conclusion was that the Council could demonstrate a 4.1 year supply. As such, there is no definitive evidence before me to contradict the Council's position, and I do not consider that Framework paragraph 11d is engaged.
25. Nevertheless, the proposal would however result in an additional windfall unit of accommodation which would contribute to the Government's broader objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, and, as a small site, could be built out quickly. The proposal would result in short-term economic benefits arising from the construction process. Economic and social benefits are also likely to arise from the occupation of the units. However, given the

³ Appeal reference APP/H1705/W/23/3326191

⁴ Appeal reference APP/H1705/W/23/3327082, issued 14 May 2024

quantum of development in this case, I give these matters limited weight in favour of the scheme.

26. Applications for planning permission are determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. For the reasons set out above, the location of the proposed development would be in conflict with the spatial strategy of the development plan. The minor benefits outlined above do not outweigh this identified harm.

Conclusion

27. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

B Phillips

INSPECTOR