



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2024 by E Street BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/24/3348467

Land on Cufau de Lane, Cufau de Lane, Bramley, Tadley RG26 5DL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Neil Sage against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01897/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as "demolition of existing outbuildings / stables and erection of a 4no bedroom dwellinghouse and detached garage".
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Decision

1. This appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. The above description is shown on the application form, appeal form and decision notice. Whilst changes were made to the design and size of the dwelling during the life of the application, this description is still sufficiently accurate. In regard to said amendments, these were done prior to the determination of the application. The plans that showed them were the plans that the Council issued their decision on. I have considered the same. I have also referred to the recently published 2024 version of the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) in my findings. I have not sought the views of the main parties since the substantive matters of the appeal are not materially affected by the changes and, as such, their respective cases would not be prejudiced. I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

5. The appeal site is immediately south of a residential estate. It is adjacent Cufau de Lane. There is some low-density development including the timber buildings on the appeal site and a detached dwelling opposite. Otherwise, the wider area is distinctly rural, open and undeveloped. It is part of a designated strategic gap between Bramley and Sherbourne St John. Despite being in close

proximity to a dense residential development, the appeal site is visually distinct, fenced off therefrom and in amongst boundary planting. The appeal site and its surroundings, as a result, exude a strong sense of rurality which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the strategic gap.

6. There is sufficient space for the dwelling proposed and I have no reason to disagree with the Council's lack of objection, in isolation, to the design approach. That said, the appeal scheme would introduce development into the strategic gap. I appreciate the timber buildings already are that, but they are simple and recessive to their surroundings. A dwelling of the scale proposed, along with its access, parking and contained curtilage would unacceptably jar against and begin to erode the strong rural qualities of the strategic gap. The dwelling would be close to but wholly distinct from the estate to the north which is contained and separated from the open rural area to the south and the wider gap by both natural landscaping and timber fencing. Its failure to acceptably integrate with the estate would emphasise the dwelling's isolation and thus its unacceptable intrusion into the strategic gap, to the detriment of its character and appearance.
7. I am unaware of the planning status of the housing development to the north and the policies and prevailing guidance at that time. In addition, and as a much more substantial development, the estate is more likely to have brought with it other benefits such as (for example) affordable housing which this proposal would not. Given this and the appeal site's distinction from it, I am not led to relying on this scheme to justify the proposal. As a single dwelling, the proposal is unlikely to cause any noticeable coalescence of settlements by itself albeit inserting a dwelling within the strategic gap would weaken the ability to resist something similar in the future.
8. The appellant has provided a number of applications which have been approved that are located within the North Sherbourne Landscape Character Area. Very little evidence has however been provided on the circumstances of these cases and specifically therefore how similar they may be to the appeal scheme. I can only therefore give them minimal weight. I have also seen examples of other development which was not on previously developed land. However, only references and very little evidence has been given surrounding their circumstances. In any event, the references do not appear to be significantly comparable for this appeal and only very limited weight can be given to them.
9. Taking this and the above into account, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies EM1, EM2, EM10, SS1 and SS6 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (BDLP) 2016, Policies D1, H1 and RE3 of the Bramley Neighbourhood Development Plan 2017, the Landscape, Biodiversity, Trees Supplementary Planning Document, the Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document 2018 and the Framework which together seek to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard, amongst other things.

Other Matters

10. There is disagreement between the main parties surrounding the status of the parcel of land and whether it is previously developed land. Policies SS1 and SS6 of the BDLP set out the strategic policies in the provision of new housing. The site has been considered to be outside of any defined settlement policy

boundaries and therefore, particular regard has been had for Policy SS6 which focusses on new housing in the countryside.

11. Notwithstanding, the matter was not raised as a main issue. Even if the land is previously developed it would be in accordance with an element of Policy SS6 of the BDLP. This would be as a result of a lack of harm and be neutral in any balance. There would still be conflict with other elements of Policy SS6 due to the harm found in any case. The matter surrounding previously developed land would not therefore address it and the resultant conflict with Policy SS6.

Planning Balance, Conclusion and Recommendation

12. There remains some disagreement as to whether the Council is able to demonstrate the supply of housing sites as required by the Framework and thus whether the most important policies are out of date. Should this be the case, and with specific regard to the matters of this appeal, I would be taken to the circumstances of paragraph 11.
13. The appeal scheme would give rise to the harm I have described above. This would be significant and long lasting and thus I ascribe it substantial weight. The proposal would provide housing but as a single unit the difference it would make to supply would be limited. The appellant has not provided any additional benefits of the scheme. However, there would be some economic effects during the construction phase and those of a social nature once the dwelling is occupied. These would again however be limited by the provision of one unit. I therefore attach limited weight to the benefits of the proposals. I have had regard to the key policies of the Framework set out but, in light of the harm I have found and the particular circumstances of the case, these do not materially affect my findings under paragraph 11.
14. As such, and with the above in mind, it is sufficiently clear that should the Council be in an undersupply situation in regard to housing the adverse impacts of granting a planning permission for the appeal scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development would not apply to the proposed development.
15. For the reasons given above, the appeal scheme would not comply with the development plan, and I have been given no other compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced and the approach of the Framework, to deviate therefrom. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Street

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

16. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison INSPECTOR