



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 March 2025

by **S Harrington MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D0121/W/25/3358531

South Hill Cottages , Bridgwater Road, Bleadon, North Somerset BS24 0BD

- 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 S Warburton against the decision of North Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/P/1106/FUL.
 - The development proposed is construction of new dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the determination of the application, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published. Parties have had the opportunity to comment on the changes within the appeal timetable. Therefore, no parties will have been prejudiced by my having regard to the latest version in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the appeal site would be a suitable location for the proposal, with regard to the local development strategy and accessibility to services and facilities;
 - whether flood risk has been sufficiently assessed and will be appropriately managed; and
 - the effect of the proposal on archaeology.

Reasons

Location

4. Policy CS14 of the North Somerset Council Core Strategy (2017) (CS) provides the development strategy for the area, distributing new housing development in accordance with a hierarchy based on settlement size, with new residential development focused within Weston-Super-Mare. Outside of Weston-Super-Mare further residential development will take place within or abutting named towns.
5. However, Bleadon is an in-fill village where CS Policy CS33 establishes that development will be strictly controlled but acceptable within defined settlement boundaries. This is to reflect the size of these villages, the limited provision of

facilities, to protect the character of rural areas, as well as prevent unsustainable patterns of development.

6. Whilst there are a number of existing dwellings in the vicinity, including those on the South Hill Farm complex, the appeal site is located outside of the defined settlement boundary. In such locations residential development is permitted in certain exceptions, none of which have been put forward in relation to the proposal before me.
7. Bleadon has a limited range of services and facilities, although the evidence indicates that a regular bus service is in operation to Weston-Super-Mare. However, whilst it may be feasible to walk to the services and facilities that are available in Bleadon and the bus stop, future occupiers would be required to walk some distance, partly along a single-track private lane with no street lighting. Walking from the site, particularly in the dark, inclement weather or in colder months, would be unattractive to most future occupiers.
8. In combination with the limited services available nearby, occupiers would be likely to rely heavily on the use of private vehicles to access services and facilities that are reasonably required for day-to-day living.
9. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal site is not a suitable location for the proposal, with regard to the local development strategy and accessibility to services and facilities. As such, it is contrary to CS policies CS14 and CS33, the aims of which I have outlined above.

Flooding

10. The area within the appeal site where the proposed dwelling would be located is within Flood Zone 1. However, the evidence before me indicates that part of the access track is within flood zone 3a as shown within the North Somerset Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and at high risk of flooding.
11. The Framework outlines that when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere, and a site-specific flood risk assessment should be provided for all development in flood zones 2 and 3 as well as land identified in a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at increased flood risk in the future.
12. Even if no built form is proposed in areas within the appeal site identified as being at risk of flooding, no site-specific flood risk assessment is before me. This poses uncertainty about whether appropriate access or escape routes can be provided to ensure safe egress from the site during flooding events, any residual risk can be safely managed or that the proposal would not increase flood risk elsewhere.
13. Overall, the submitted evidence does not provide me with sufficient certainty as to whether this matter could be addressed or not. Therefore, it has not been clearly demonstrated that flood risk has been sufficiently assessed and will be appropriately managed. Consequently, I conclude that there is conflict with CS Policy CS3 and Policy DM1 of the Sites and Policies Plan (Part 1) 2016 (PP) which seek, amongst other things, to reduce flood risk overall and ensure that the impact of new development on flooding is fully taken into account.

Archaeology

14. The appeal site lies in close proximity to an Iron Age/Romano-British field system of South Hill which I am informed consists of various archaeological monuments. Furthermore, the site is adjacent to South Hill Farm core settlement and farmstead which may still preserve medieval or earlier outlines and building fabric from the 17th and 18th centuries.
15. No archaeological information has been provided with the submission. Whilst the appeal site falls outside of the above noted heritage assets, their proximity could reasonably result in archaeological potential at the appeal site. However, In the absence of any information such as a desk-based assessment, it is not possible to ascertain the archaeological potential, significance, or indeed the resulting effect of the proposal. Therefore, this is a matter which should be resolved before planning permission is granted rather than leaving it to a planning condition.
16. Consequently, even if other applications in the surrounding area have been approved without archaeology being a concern, I conclude that it is not possible to satisfactorily ascertain the proposal would have an acceptable effect on archaeology. The proposal therefore conflicts with CS Policy CS5 and PP Policy DM6 which seek, amongst other things, to ensure archaeological interests are fully taken into account in order to safeguard heritage assets and the historic environment.

Other Matters

17. The proposal would provide a modest single dwelling to the area's housing stock, which I am informed would incorporate a number of sustainable features. Furthermore, there would be benefits to the local economy both short term during the construction period, and longer term due to future occupier's use of services and facilities in the surrounding villages and towns. However, due to the scope and scale of the proposal, these benefits would be modest.
18. Even if the design of the proposal and parking provision are acceptable and it does not result in any harm to neighbouring occupiers living conditions, these are neutral factors in the planning balance.
19. Although the appellant's frustrations with the Council's handling of the application have been brought to my attention, this has little to do with the planning merits of the case, which I have considered on the basis of the evidence before me.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. No material considerations, individually or cumulatively indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

S Harrington

INSPECTOR