



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 March 2025

by **SE Hughes BA (Hons) PGDip MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/24/3356722

Signal Box Farm, Spring Lane, Burghclere, Newbury, Berkshire, RG20 9JP

- 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 Martin Baikie against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01697/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a single detached dwellinghouse together with parking and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed, and planning permission is granted for the construction of a single detached dwellinghouse with parking and landscaping at Signal Box Farm, Spring Lane, Newbury, RG20 9JP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/01697/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Preliminary Matters

2. During the course of the appeal the revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published which changed the methodology for calculating local housing need figures. As a consequence, the Council now accept that they cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - whether the proposal accords with the spatial strategy of the development plan; and
 - the effect of the proposed house on the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside.

Reasons

Spatial Strategy

4. The appeal site is located outside Burghclere's defined settlement boundary and is considered countryside for planning purposes under policies SS1 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 (BDLP) and B1 of the Burghclere Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2029 (BPNP). Policy SS6 of the BDLP sets out a handful of exceptions where new housing development in the countryside would be supported. Criterion (e) of the policy permits small-scale residential proposals of four dwellings or fewer where it satisfies a "locally agreed need" and it accords with

subcategories (ix), which requires the development to be well related to the existing settlement and not result in an isolated form of development, and (x) and (xi), which requires the development to respect the surrounding landscape and neighbouring properties. With regards to subcategories (x) and (xi) of SS6(e) I have considered these below under character and appearance.

5. The appeal proposal is for a single detached dwelling and therefore would be a small-scale residential proposal. The BDLP explains that a “locally agreed need” is “where it can be demonstrated that it would meet a local need, as agreed in consultation with the parish/town council.”
6. As the parties now agree that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites in the district, and the Parish Council have indicated that it is supportive of the application, for the purpose of Policy SS6(e) there is an established local housing need.
7. With regards to its location, having been formally associated with Burghclere’s former Didcot, Newbury and Southampton Railway line and the village’s former train station, the site is a short distance from Burghclere’s defined settlement boundary and sits within the context of a substantial agricultural building, a redundant signal box and former station toilets. In addition, there are several other dwellings close by, along Spring Lane, namely ‘The Old Station’, ‘The Sidings’ and ‘Trevaney’. Consequently, the site has a good connection to the settlement and the development would not be viewed as a standalone house, distant from the village and other houses.
8. The planning officer report indicates that there are no shops or services in the village. However, there are several facilities in Burghclere, including a public house, an independent school, a community hall, a church and a chapel, that are all within approximately 800m. There is also a pre-school, a primary school and a secondary school. The presence of these local services contributing to the village’s defined settlement boundary demarcation and its potential for housing under policy SS1.
9. In addition, the Council have also raised concerns that there is no footway or streetlights along Spring Lane, which leads to the nearest bus stop on Harts Lane. Although Spring Lane is unlit and does not have a pavement, it is a short distance of approximately 200m from the junction with Harts Lane, which is likely to reduce vehicle speeds. In addition, it has ample verges to step onto if required, so could be safely navigated by foot or bicycle. As such, this would be a relatively safe and short route for pedestrians and cyclists to use to reach the local bus stop.
10. Consequently, I consider that the dwelling would be well related to the existing settlement and would not result in an isolated form of development in accordance with the locational aims of BDLP policy SS1 and criterion (e) and subcategory (ix) of SS6, and policy B1 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Character and Appearance

11. The proposed development is for a detached one and a half storey contemporary dwelling resembling an agricultural barn or an industrial, railway goods shed, on land to the northeast of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (formerly the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty). The proposal would be sited on land which would have been on the opposite side of the former railway track to the existing redundant signal box and the train station’s toilet building.

12. The dwelling would be a simple profiled metal portal-framed structure with recessed gable ends. Whilst the quasi-industrial/agricultural style building would be different from the traditional houses in Burghclere and the nearest properties along Spring Lane, in the context of the station's utilitarian buildings and the modern agricultural barn, it would not look out of place. The height of the development stepping down from the taller barn to the lower railway buildings, therefore complementing the existing buildings. Furthermore, the fabric of the materials used, comprising profiled and flat metal cladding and timber cladding, would reflect the adjacent agricultural building and the site's railway heritage.
13. In addition, trees and woodland to the west, would restrict views of the development from the National Landscape, whilst from Spring Lane, retained trees and hedgerows along the site boundary and tree and hedgerow cover along the road would help to soften the appearance of the building from this vantage point. Similarly, vegetation to the southern boundaries, albeit fragmented, would filter views into the site from a nearby public footpath. Therefore, in accordance with subcategories (x) and (xi) of policy SS6(e) the development would not detract from the surrounding landscape including the setting of the National Landscape or neighbouring properties.
14. With regards to the glazing within the north and south gable ends, as it would be recessed and orientated away from the National Landscape, and views of it would be filtered by intervening boundary vegetation, it would not detract from the surrounding countryside. Similarly, existing boundary vegetation would limit views of any domestic paraphernalia associated with the dwelling.
15. Accordingly, for the reasons above, I find that the proposal would not unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the surrounding countryside, including the setting of the National Landscape, and therefore accords with policies EM1 and EM10 of the BDLP, which require high quality development that respects the local environment and responds to local distinctiveness, and policies B1 and B5 of the BPNP, which requires development to contribute positively to the character of the local area. Furthermore, the development is consistent with the Framework which supports rural housing developments that reflect local needs.

Other Matters

16. Whilst I note that the "previously developed land" status of the site is contested by the parties, given that I have concluded that the proposal meets the provisions of criterion (e) of policy SS6 above, I have not needed to consider this matter pursuant to criterion (a) of the policy.
17. The Council have compared the proposal to a number of appeal sites which were considered unsuitable due to insufficient sustainable travel options or a lack of services. Although I have considered the various appeal decisions put forward, I have limited details regarding their overall site context. However, from what I have, the characteristics of each site and settlement are different to the proposal. Indeed, all but one are associated with villages without a defined settlement boundary. The point made in respect of the one that is not, is that a comfortable walkable distance is typically within 800m, which the bus stop and several community facilities are. Thus, the circumstances that applied to those other cases are not directly comparable to the appeal before me. As such, these appeals have not led me to alter my decision.

18. The Parish Council have indicated that the colour of the building would not best reflect the site's railway heritage. However, the colour of the materials is not specified in the application. Therefore, a condition attached to the grant of planning permission requiring materials to be agreed with the Council would suitably ensure that the colour of the building is in keeping with the site and its railway heritage.

Conditions

19. The Council has suggested a number of conditions in the event that the appeal is upheld. I have considered these against the Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), revising the conditions where necessary to reflect the advice contained therein.
20. Condition 1, requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans, is necessary for the avoidance of doubt, as to the development permitted. Condition 2 is necessary as the standard time condition. For the reason given above, condition 3, requiring the materials to be approved by the Council, is necessary.
21. Condition 4 is necessary to ensure the provision, establishment and maintenance of a good standard of landscaping in the interests of providing a satisfactory residential environment. Condition 5 requiring lighting to be approved is necessary in the interest of the visual amenities of the area.
22. Conditions 6 and 7 are necessary to protect the residential amenity of occupants of nearby properties from noise disturbance during the construction. Condition 8 is necessary to mitigate for impacts on priority species and to address invasive species issues related to the removal of Japanese Knotweed from the site.
23. Condition 9 and 10 are necessary in the interests of highway safety to maintain adequate visibility, and to secure the provision and retention of the parking area. Condition 11 is necessary to ensure trees are protected during construction and condition 12 is necessary for the efficient use of water resources. Condition 13 is necessary in the interest of visual amenity and to ensure the proposal supports the Council's waste reduction and recycling targets.
24. I have removed the Council's suggested condition 13 requiring details of the cycle storage facilities to be provided within the site. I consider there would be sufficient space within the site, or in the double garage for the secure parking of cycles therefore the condition is unnecessary. I have also removed condition 14 which removes permitted development rights as it does not pass the test of reasonableness or necessity.

Conclusion

25. For the above reasons, the proposal accords with the development plan, when read as a whole and there are no material considerations that indicate that the development should be determined otherwise than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

SE Hughes

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - Location Plan – Drawing No 2315 - PL01
 - Proposed Site Plan – Drawing No 2315 – PL10A
 - Proposed Floor Plans – Drawing No 2315 – PL11
 - Proposed Roof Plan – Drawing No 2315 - PL12
 - Proposed Elevations – Drawing No 2315 – PL13
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this planning permission.
- 3) No development shall commence above ground floor slab level until a schedule of materials and finishes (to include precise details ie product specification and manufacturer) to be used for the external walls and roofs of the proposed buildings has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out and thereafter maintained in accordance with the details so approved.
- 4) Notwithstanding the submitted plans, no development above slab level shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, a scheme of hard and soft landscaping which shall specify materials, species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees where appropriate) along with details of boundary treatments and hard surfacing. The works approved shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following the first occupation of the buildings or when the use hereby permitted is commenced. In addition, a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed, or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 5) No external lighting shall be installed on site until details of any lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The equipment shall be installed before the development is first occupied/use commences and shall thereafter be operated and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.
- 6) No work relating to the construction of the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to operations, or fitting out, shall take place before the hours of 7:30am nor after 6pm Monday to Friday, before the hours of 8am nor after 1pm Saturdays nor on Sundays or recognised public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 7) No deliveries of construction materials or plant and machinery and no removal of any spoil from the site shall take place before the hours of 7:30am nor after 6pm Monday to Friday, before the hours of 8am nor after 1pm Saturdays nor on

- Sundays or recognised public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
- 8) The development should be undertaken in line with recommendations and procedures contained within Chapter 4 Assessments and Recommendations of the Ecological Assessment by GS Ecology dated 7 June 2024.
 - 9) The development hereby approved shall not be occupied until sightlines of 2.4m x 77m to the north and 2.4m x 64m to the south from the site access onto the highway, in which there should be no obstruction to visibility exceeding 1m in height above the adjacent carriageway channel line, have been completed. Such sightlines shall thereafter be retained for the lifetime of the development.
 - 10) The development shall not be occupied until the vehicle parking area has been constructed in accordance with the approved details and that area shall not thereafter be used for any purpose other than parking, loading, and unloading of vehicles.
 - 11) The development should be carried out in line with the submitted aboricultural report (produced by RMT Tree Consultancy Ltd reference RMT964, dated 27 March 2024). Tree protection in accordance with the aboricultural report's Tree Constraints Plan shall be erected prior to any site activity commencing and maintained until completion of the development. No development or other operations shall take place other than in complete accordance with the tree protection shown on the Tree Constraints Plan.
 - 12) Prior to occupation, a Construction Statement detailing how the development shall meet a water efficiency standard of 110 litres or less per person per day has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, unless otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority through a demonstration that this requirement for sustainable water use cannot be achieved on technical or viability grounds. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 13) The development hereby permitted shall not be occupied or the approved use commence, whichever is the sooner, until the development has provision within its curtilage for refuse and recycling storage (prior to disposal), the surface materials from the carriageway to the waste container collection point shall be smooth and shall not hinder the movement of waste containers to the collection vehicle and shall make space to provide 1no 240 litre refuse wheelie bin, 1no 240 litre recycling wheelie bin and 1no glass recycling box, and the area of land so provided shall not be used for any purposes other than the storage (prior to disposal) or the collection of refuse and recycling and shall be thereafter retained and maintained as such.