



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 March 2025

by R Kent BA (Hons) MTP DipM MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/P1133/W/24/3356058

Land at NGR 290810, 090383, Ide EX2 9FB

- 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 R Alderson (4MATION (SW) Ltd) against the decision of Teignbridge District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01428/FUL.
 - The development proposed is described as “This application seeks full planning permission for the revised scheme for the formation of a yard for the storage of machinery and construction materials and the siting of 12 secure storage containers and associated landscaping”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of the development on the application form refers to the application being ‘retrospective.’ This in itself is not a form of development and I have not included it in the description of development above. However, I saw on my site visit that the number of containers on the site exceeded 12 and the extent of hardstanding differed from that shown on the ‘Site Plans’ drawing reference P/SLP/O1 revision 3. I have therefore determined the appeal on the basis of the submitted plans.
3. The NGR numbers in the heading above are taken from the planning application form. Whilst the Council’s decision notice uses different NGR numbers I have based my decision on the site plans referred to above.
4. The plans do not include elevations of the shipping containers. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis that the size and form of the containers that I saw on the site are indicative of what is proposed.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings with particular reference to its location in the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV); and
 - whether the proposed development would be in a suitable location having regard to development plan policies concerning new business development in the countryside.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The site lies in undulating countryside on a parcel of land between the A30 dual carriageway and Ide Village Road. Accessed via a narrow lane from Ide Village Road, a belt of trees and undergrowth runs along its western boundary with further trees and bushes between the lane and Ide Village Road screening the site from the road. Even though the site lies between two roads and there are occasional agricultural and other buildings in the vicinity, overall, it is situated in a verdant, rural location.
7. The Teignbridge Landscape Character Assessment 2024 (LCA) identifies the site as lying within landscape character type LCT3A: 'Upper Farmed and Wooded Valley Slopes'. Although the A30 is identified as having a local impact on the tranquillity of this otherwise remote landscape, the LCA describes the landscape character as comprising extensive areas of high undulating slopes in pastoral cultivation with some villages and urban areas, river valley slopes and river valleys. More specifically, the Ide Neighbourhood Plan 2018 (INP) describes the land between the A30 and Ide Village Road, where the site is located, as a vital buffer zone, which amongst other things, safeguards the appearance of the countryside approaching the village. My own observations concur with these descriptions.
8. The group of shipping containers would create a substantial, flat roofed rectangular block facing the A30 extending from the site entrance towards its northern boundary. The block would be utilitarian in both character and appearance and would not constitute the high quality of design which Teignbridge Local Plan 2014 (TLP) policy S2 requires of new development. The proposed storage of large pieces of machinery and construction materials on the site, and in particular, on the hardstanding south of the proposed containers would give the site a substantially developed appearance when viewed from the A30. Whilst the Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) suggests that vehicles on the A30 would be moving at speed thereby limiting the time which occupants of the vehicles would have to view the site, the proposal would nevertheless have an unattractive, urbanising effect and would not integrate with the natural environment of the surrounding rural landscape.
9. The LVIA indicates that once the proposed planting matured, it would provide screening to views from the A30. Whilst the landscaping would soften the appearance of the site and reduce the visual harm caused to the appearance of the countryside from the A30, it would not however overcome the physical harm caused to the rural character of this sensitive gateway location to the village or to the wider AGLV by the development of the site.
10. Although the proposal would be screened from Ide Village Road by the existing vegetation and would not conflict with criteria i. to iv. of INP policy IDE07, the utilitarian form of the containers would nevertheless still be substantially at odds with the rural character of the surrounding countryside and the approach to the village which the policy seeks to protect.
11. The evidence indicates that the site may have been previously used by the Highway Authority for temporary storage of equipment and materials,. However, I am not aware of the details of that use or its planning status. Each case must be

considered on its individual merits and although the evidence indicates a previous use may have been carried out as permitted development under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, that does not justify the harm that would be caused by the proposed use.

12. Policies GP1, GP3 and EN4 of the emerging Teignbridge Local Plan 2020-2040 are referred to in the reason for refusal. The harm which I have identified would conflict with these policies in so far as they seek to protect and enhance the countryside. The emerging plan, however, is currently at examination with Main Modifications expected to be published for consultation in May/June 2025 with the intention of it being adopted in the autumn. Whilst the plan is at an advanced stage, the evidence does not indicate the extent to which there are unresolved objections to the policies referred to. I have therefore given the conflict with them limited weight in the appeal.
13. Nevertheless, for the reasons given the development would cause harm to the rural character of the site and its surroundings including the AGLV contrary to TLP policies S2 and EN2A and INP policy IDE07 which seek to protect and enhance the AGLV and the rural character of the approaches to the village.

Location

14. The site falls outside any settlement boundary and lies within the open countryside for the purposes of development plan policy. Whilst the proposal is for the storage of machinery and construction materials and the siting of containers for storage, the Council's officer report considers this to fall within the category of 'warehousing.' I have no reason to reach a different conclusion. As such it would fall within one of the categories of development which policy S22 indicates would be acceptable in principle in the countryside subject to various criteria. Although not referenced in the reason for refusal, policy S22 requires that proposed warehousing development in the countryside takes account of the distinctive characteristics and qualities of the LCA. For the reasons given above, the development would cause harm to these characteristics and qualities.
15. Policy EC3 of the TLP indicates in more detail the type of storage and distribution uses which might be acceptable in principle in the open countryside. Whilst the proposal would serve the appellant's groundworks business, the proposal would not involve the extension or expansion of an existing business site. Nor have I seen any compelling evidence that the proposal is part of the diversification of a farm or have a strong functional link to local agriculture, forestry or other existing rural activity. As a result, it would not fall within any of the categories a) to e) of acceptable development identified in the policy. Even if it were to fall within any of those categories, for the reasons given under the first main issue, the proposal would not respect the character and qualities of the landscape or minimise its impact to acceptable levels. Whilst it may be relatively close to the village of Ide and have convenient access to the A30 and the strategic road network, it would fail to comply with criterion g) of the policy.
16. Policy EE1 in the emerging plan proposes a large, residential-led mixed use on land allocated at Markham Village. The development at Markham is being brought forward through the development plan process and, if adopted, the plan would require the development to comply with a range of criteria before it could be approved. The draft proposal has limited weight at this stage in its preparation.

Notwithstanding this, possible future development at Markham does not justify the piecemeal erosion of the character of the AGLV or the sensitive gateway corridor leading to Ide which would be caused by the appeal proposal.

17. Whilst the Framework states that sites to meet business needs may have to be found beyond existing settlements, it also states that it is important that development is sensitive to its surroundings.
18. Therefore, for the reasons given, the site would not be in a suitable location for a new business development in the countryside and would conflict with TLP policies S22 and EC3 regarding rural employment and development in the countryside.

Other Matters

19. I am aware of the previous appeal decision on the site¹. Whilst I have read the decision I am not familiar with all the details of that case. I have considered the current appeal on its individual merits and reached a conclusion on the evidence before me.
20. The Ecological Impact Assessment states that the Exe Estuary Special Protection Area and Ramsar site lies 3.5km to the east of the site. Regulation 63(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 indicates that the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment (AA) is only necessary where the competent authority is minded to give consent for the proposed development. Therefore, given my conclusions on the main issues, it is not necessary for me to consider the need for an AA in any further detail.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

21. Against the harm I have identified, the proposal would support an existing business by providing a site close to the strategic road network which would be an economic benefit to which I attach moderate weight in accordance with the Framework's policy to build a strong and competitive economy. The proposed biodiversity net gain would also be a benefit of the scheme attracting moderate weight in favour of the proposal.
22. The conflict with TLP policies S2, EN2A, S22 and EC3 and INP policy IDE07 carries substantial weight against the proposal. Although the proposal also conflicts with policies GP1, GP3 and EN4 of the emerging Teignbridge Local Plan, that conflict only carries limited weight against the proposal given the stage of preparation that the plan has reached.
23. In conclusion, the proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

R Kent

INSPECTOR

¹ APP/P1133/W/23/3331634