



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 April 2025

by **C Coles MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 JUNE 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/W/25/3360472

Land to the North West of Westwood, Southwick Road, North Boarhunt, Fareham

- 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 & Mrs Osborne against the decision of Winchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01884/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of 4-bedroom self-build dwelling, relocated access, parking, drainage and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the appeal site would be a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to local and national planning policy.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises relatively flat, undeveloped agricultural land adjacent to the property formerly known as Westwood (now known as Mulberry House). The site fronts onto the B2177, shares a boundary on two sides with agricultural land and the property Mulberry House on the other. The surrounding uses comprise agricultural land and sporadic residential and commercial development.
4. The proposed development is for a four-bedroom, two-storey, self-build dwelling accessed from the B2177 (Southwick Road).
5. Policy MTRA4 (MTRA4) of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (March 2013) (LP Part 1) seeks to restrict new development in the countryside to that which requires a countryside location, re-uses an existing building, supports established businesses or for low key tourist accommodation providing there is no harm to the character of the area. The site is located outside any defined settlement boundary and is located within land designated as countryside.

6. I note the appellants comments that the site is within the settlement of North Boarhunt and, that a village boundary cannot be defined by mapping information but an assessment of the extent of the settlement on the ground including surrounding development, the speed limit on the carriageway outside the site and the location of the site after a sign welcoming motorists to North Boarhunt.
7. However, North Boarhunt does not have a settlement boundary. Whilst there is residential development to the east and Mud Island set behind boundary screening and the B2177 to the south, the north and west of the site are characterised by agricultural land and have a distinctly rural feel. The location of the signage in relation to speed and welcoming motorists to North Boarhunt cannot be considered as defining a settlement as the location of the signage will have been determined based on considerations other than planning policy.
8. Policy MTRA3 (MTRA3) of the LP Part 1 allows for development and redevelopment consisting of infilling of a small site within a continuously developed road frontage in settlements which have no clearly defined settlement boundary, where the development is of a form compatible with the character of the area and would not involve the loss of important gaps between developed areas.
9. I note the suggestion that the site constitutes infilling as the northern side of Southwick Road from Hundred Acres Road to the west to Trampers Lane to the east comprises development, which together with development on the southern side of the B2177 results in a continuously built-up spatial pattern. However, whilst Mulberry House is located on the road frontage to the east of the site, further to the east development is sporadic and largely set back from the road. The land to the west of the site is agricultural and therefore there is no continuous built-up road frontage on the northern side of the B2177. South of the B2177 development is setback from the roadside and equally sporadic. The site does not form a small gap which is part of a continuously developed road frontage and does not meet the MTRA3 policy criteria for infilling.
10. Policy MTRA3 also allows for development that would meet a community need or fulfil a community aspiration. This should be identified through a neighbourhood plan or process that demonstrates clear community support. The letters of support for the proposal are acknowledged but this does not amount to clear community support for the proposal and neither does the proposal serve the community.
11. The Council have not objected to the proposal based on the effect of the proposal on the character of the area. However, the proposal is in conflict with Policies MTRA3 and MTRA4 which seek to retain the countryside characteristics of the area by restricting development to that with an essential need or which infills a small gap on a continuously developed road frontage and therefore the proposal conflicts with the policies when taken as a whole.

12. The appeal site is located approximately 1 mile from Wickham which is the nearest centre with everyday facilities. Mud Island opposite has a shop, but this does not provide everyday items. I do not consider the accessibility to settlements with everyday facilities via bus to be a realistic alternative to private transport due to the distance from the site to bus stops and the frequency of the services at those stops. Whilst it is acknowledged that sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and that villages and settlements can together provide a suite of services, due to the site's location away from a defined settlement, the lack of everyday facilities in North Boarhunt and inadequate public transport services the site is not considered to be within a suitable location.
13. I note that even if the site were to be reached mainly by private transport, the trips to reach local services would not be excessively long. However, whilst individually trips by private transport would not necessarily result in material harm, they would have a cumulative impact and there is a national and local policy steer directing new residential development to more sustainable locations unless specific circumstances apply.
14. The appeal is for a self-build dwelling which is a material consideration, although no mechanism has been provided for securing this. The Council maintain a self-build register and although it has a shortfall in the number of self-build plots permitted against the identified need, it has more recently made progress in relation to granting permissions to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding and is actively supporting/promoting self-build through various means. For the avoidance of doubt, for the purposes of this appeal, even though it is doubtful how such would be secured, I have determined the appeal as if it would provide a self-build dwelling and noting the shortfall as identified by the appellant.
15. In conclusion, the appeal site lies outside any identified settlement policy boundary in a countryside location. The proposal would not constitute infilling as it is not located within a continuous built-up boundary and is not considered to be in a sustainable location due to distance from local services and the need to rely on private transport to reach the nearest services. The proposal is not therefore a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to local and national planning policy. It is contrary to Policies MTRA3 and MTRA4 of the LP Part 1 which seek to prevent unjustified additional dwellings in the countryside. For the same reasons it is also in conflict with the aims of promoting sustainable transport set out in the National Planning Policy Framework.

Other Matters

16. My attention has been drawn to Prior Approval 21/02374/PNACOU for the change of use of an agricultural building to 1 no dwelling on a site to the rear of Mulberry House. I have not been provided with details of the case, however, the prior approval for the conversion of an agricultural barn to a dwelling is fundamentally different to an application for a new dwelling and therefore the two schemes are not comparable.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

21. The Council is able to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, however it has not met its targets for permitting self and custom build dwellings against the identified need. Despite this, the appellant has not provided a mechanism for securing the dwelling as a self-build. Even so, for the avoidance of any doubt I afford full weight to the benefit of the proposal being a self-build dwelling in the context of the shortfall of self-build plots in the area.
22. The benefits of the development are the provision of a single dwelling which would make a small contribution to the supply of new homes. It would have the benefit of being a self-build dwelling. There would also be benefits to the local economy during construction and for the lifetime of the development through additional spending by occupants of the development.
23. In the overall planning balance, in my view, the harm arising from the proposed unsuitable location and associated need to rely on private transport to reach the nearest services would outweigh all the combined benefits. As a result, the proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and the material considerations in this case do not indicate that the decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Coles

INSPECTOR