



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2025

by **H Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 01 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/24/3352099

Land off Ash Lane, Ash Lane, Silchester, Hampshire RG7 2NH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Richard Mackworth-Pread against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02094/OUT.
 - The development proposed is outline planning application with all matters reserved, except for access and layout, for the erection of 1no. detached dwelling with a detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the proposal relates to a listed building, I have had special regard to sections 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act), which requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest.
3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was published in December 2024 after the Council made its decision. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decision.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the site is a suitable location for the proposal having regard to local and national policy, and the accessibility of the site to services and facilities;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the proposal would preserve the setting of the Grade II listed building known as 'Haines Farmhouse'.

Reasons

Suitability of site location

5. The appeal site is a parcel of undeveloped land located adjacent to Ash Lane. It is one of several fields that is used for equestrian purposes. It is accessed from a private track, which leads to Latchmore House to the west of the site.

6. Permission is sought for a family dwelling and detached garage. The site would be accessed via the existing private track and parking would be provided on site.
7. Policy SS1 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2019) (adopted 2016) (BDLP) sets out the local strategy for housing delivery and refers to permitting development within the Settlement Policy Boundaries (SPBs). The appeal site is not within a SPB and is therefore in the countryside. The appeal proposal is also not a form of development that complies with Policy SS1, as this policy only supports residential countryside development that forms an exception site, which does not apply to this scheme.
8. Policy SS6 of the BDLP relates to proposals for new housing outside of SPBs, which it says will only be permitted where they are, of most relevance to the proposed location and land use, small scale residential proposals of a scale and type that meet a locally agreed need, and provided that they are well related to the existing settlement, and would not result in an isolated form of development.
9. Whilst the proposed development would be small-scale and sited near to existing housing, it is nevertheless outside of a defined settlement boundary. There is also no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate that a locally agreed need has been met.
10. The appeal site is located some distance from the nearest settlement that offers a range of services and facilities of the type necessary to meet day to day needs. Therefore, although the appeal site is not isolated in respect of its relationship with the surrounding built form, it is located far from shops and services.
11. I observed during my site visit the unlit road with no footway and the lack of bus stops in the vicinity of the appeal site. Whilst there are Public Rights of Way near to the site, these routes are unlit and unsurfaced, which would limit their use during hours of darkness and are unlikely to be suitable for all users.
12. The unlit nature of these routes and the lack of footway along the road limit the prospect of future occupants of the proposal using them to regularly access a range of services and facilities year-round.
13. I note the comments from the appellant regarding a previous permission on Ash Lane. However, I do not know the planning circumstances that led to this approval. With regards to the appeal site, most journeys to access day to day services and facilities are likely to be made in a private motor vehicle, particularly during hours of darkness or bad weather conditions. This would result in future occupants of the proposal using motor vehicles to travel to services and facilities on a frequent basis.
14. Although the Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, this does not justify locating development in an inherently inaccessible location by means other than the car. Given my findings above, there would be conflict with the Framework in these respects.
15. For the reasons given, the proposal would not be a suitable location for residential development having regard to local and national planning policy. It would conflict with Policies SS1 and SS6 of the BDLP. In addition, it would fail to accord with the Framework in respect of achieving sustainable development.

Character and appearance

16. The appeal site is a gently sloping undeveloped parcel of grassland. It forms part of a wider field that is used for equestrian purposes. The site itself has an open grassy appearance and makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
17. The existing residential development on Ash Lane is characterised by established ribbon development positioned on the eastern side of the road. The existing dwellings are set within spacious plots and are mostly visible from the road. There are also light industrial units located at the Ash Park Business Centre on the eastern side of Ash Lane. In contrast, the western side of the road retains a predominantly unbuilt-up frontage where residential properties are sparse.
18. The proposal would introduce built form onto the appeal site whose undeveloped and naturalised appearance visually distinguishes it as an obvious feature of the countryside rather than an intrinsic part of the settlement. It currently contributes to maintaining the dispersed and rural character of this part of the settlement. Whilst the proposed development would be low density and it is intended to keep much of the existing mature trees and hedgerow on its roadside boundary, the proposal would nevertheless erode the open attributes of the field.
19. Furthermore, given the elevated height of the site in relation to Ash Lane, the proposed dwelling and garage would be prominent when viewed from the road. The formation of a new access from either the private track or the road would involve the loss of hedgerow and trees, and would introduce hard, urban elements. These would be at odds with the soft appearance of the site.
20. Therefore, the presence of the dwelling, together with the associated hardstanding materials and domestic paraphernalia, would erode the undeveloped character of the site, which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would appear as a dominant built form that would result in a visual intrusion into the countryside.
21. Moreover, the proposal would not adjoin the ribbon form of existing dwellings on the opposite side of the road and would appear visually separate from Latchmore House, which sits further back. Instead, it would be in a position that would be at odds with the overriding pattern of built form in the settlement and would appear incongruous as a result.
22. Consequently, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies EM1 and EM10 of the BDLP. These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure developments are sympathetic to the character of the area and positively contribute to its local distinctiveness and sense of place.

Heritage asset

23. The appeal site is located a short distance away from Haines Farmhouse, on the opposite side of the road. This building is Grade II listed¹ and dates back to the 17th century, with alterations in the 19th century. It is a two-storey dwelling with exposed timber frames and brick walling with a half-hipped old tile roof and casement windows. Based on my site visit and the evidence before me, I find that

¹ List entry Number: 1092797

the listed building's special interest insofar as is relevant to this appeal is derived from its historical and architectural interest, and its illustration of 17th and 19th century domestic architecture. It is also derived from its timber framing and brickwork, its surviving historic fabric, use of traditional materials, and its pleasing architectural style and design.

24. Pertinent to the appeal, the building's special interest and significance also stems, in part, from its setting. The largely rural area surrounding the property contributes in a positive way to its heritage merit.
25. Although some modern development, such as the business park, has occurred to the east of the road, the overall pattern of development along Ash Lane remains largely linear and concentrated on the eastern side. This pattern has preserved the open and rural character of the land to the west, which continues to form an important part of the historic setting of the listed building. Despite nearby development, the listed building's historic relationship with its surrounding rural landscape remains legible and contributes meaningfully to its significance.
26. The appeal site, located on the west side of the road directly opposite the listed building, retains a verdant, undeveloped character that reinforces this rural setting. It provides natural relief and maintains the sense of openness that has historically defined the context of the listed building.
27. While there is some boundary vegetation, including hedging and trees, that provides partial screening, this does not fully obscure the site. Additional planting could be secured by condition, but such planting could not be guaranteed to survive or be maintained in the longer term. Gaps in the vegetation and the seasonal nature of tree cover mean that the proposal would still be visible from the vicinity of the listed building. Moreover, setting is not only about visual connections; the open character of the site, its rural quality, and its contribution to the building's sense of place and historic context are also key considerations.
28. The proposed development would disrupt this balance by introducing built form in an area that has remained largely free of development. It would appear incongruous within the established pattern of growth, and due to its proximity to the listed building, it would erode the building's relationship with its rural surroundings. Consequently, the proposal would cause harm to the setting of the listed building by diminishing the openness and rural qualities that currently support its heritage value.
29. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the listed building, and would harm the significance of the heritage asset. With reference to paragraphs 214 and 215 of the Framework, in finding harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset, the magnitude of that harm should be assessed. Given the extent and fairly localised nature of the proposal, I find that the harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset assessed above would be 'less than substantial' but nevertheless of considerable importance and weight. Paragraph 215 of the Framework requires this harm to be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
30. The proposal, which is intended to be a family home, would contribute in a small way to meeting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. It would also make an economic contribution during the construction period and subsequently from future occupiers in terms of spending in the local

area, which would help to support local businesses, facilities, and services. The scheme would also introduce some biodiversity enhancements. However, these benefits would be modest relating to only one proposed dwelling.

31. On balance, in giving considerable importance and weight to the harm to the significance of the listed building, I find that this would not be outweighed by the limited public benefits arising from the proposal.
32. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would fail to preserve the setting of the Grade II listed building. As such, it would fail to satisfy the requirements of the Act and the provisions within the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment. It would also conflict with Policy EM11 of the BDLP. This policy, amongst other things, seeks to ensure developments conserve or enhance the quality of the borough's heritage assets.

Other Matters

33. The appellant has indicated that the proposal could be for a self-build dwelling. However, there is no mechanism before me to secure the proposed development as self-build, such as a planning obligation, and none which I could legitimately impose. Accordingly, the proposal would be for an open-market dwelling within the countryside.
34. My attention has been drawn to a previous permission on Ash Lane. However, this other development was closely related to and able to be integrated with the form and layout of the existing ribbon development. As such, there are significant differences between that permission and the proposal before me. In any event, I have determined this appeal on its own merits and its site-specific characteristics.
35. My attention has also been drawn to other appeal decisions. Nevertheless, the full details and the circumstances which led to these other developments being determined are not before me. In any event, I have considered the proposal upon its own merits based on the evidence before me and my observations on site.

Planning Balance

36. The submitted evidence indicates that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites in accordance with the Framework. The net gain of one dwelling as a result of the proposal would support the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing stock where there is a shortfall. I therefore attribute weight to this benefit.
37. Nevertheless, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, and the setting of a Grade II listed building, contrary to Policies EM1, EM10, and EM11 of the BDLP. The proposal would also conflict with Policies SS1 and SS6 of the BDLP. These policies are broadly consistent with the Framework's sustainability principles and protection of the countryside. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole.
38. Given the housing land supply position, paragraph 11d of the Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is relevant. Nonetheless, at paragraph 11d) i., the Framework confirms that this presumption does not apply where the application of policies therein that protect areas of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the proposal. This includes heritage assets (footnote 7) such as the Grade II listed building.

39. Having had regard to my conclusions that the proposal would harm the setting of the Listed Building, the application of the Framework's policies regarding the protection of designated heritage assets, provides a strong reason for refusing the development. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.

Conclusion

40. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR