
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2025

by **C Butcher BSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F0114/W/25/3364548

Hartley Wood Equestrian Centre, King Lane, Clutton, BS39 5QA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Richard & Michele Evans & Britton against the decision of Bath and North East Somerset Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/04603/PIP.
 - The development proposed is a Permission in Principle Planning Application for the conversion of the existing barns on site to provide up to 8 residential dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for a minimum of 6 and maximum of 8 dwellings at Hartley Wood Equestrian Centre, King Lane, Clutton, BS39 5QA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/04603/PIP.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has two stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent stage') is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. It is only at the technical details consent stage where a planning permission can be granted. This appeal relates to the first of these two stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted¹. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent Technical Details Consent application if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

4. The site is located within the Green Belt. However, the Council is satisfied that the proposal would not represent inappropriate development within the Green Belt on the basis that it would meet the requirements of paragraph 154(g) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). This states that the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land is not inappropriate providing that it would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green

¹ PPG Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615

Belt than the existing development. Based on the evidence before me, I have no reason to disagree with the Council's conclusions in this regard.

5. The issues of land use and the amount of development are also not matters in dispute between the parties. The main issue is therefore whether the existing buildings are suitable for conversion, taking account of the location of the site.

Reasons

6. Given that the proposed development would involve the conversion of existing rural buildings, it is clear that Policy RE6 of the Council's Core Strategy and Placemaking Plan, Volume 1 District wide Strategy and Policies, January 2023 (the CS) is of most relevance to this case. The policy sets out that the re-use of rural buildings to a new use will only be permitted subject to various criteria. Part 5 of the policy notes that, where the building is isolated from public services and community facilities, and unrelated to an established group of buildings, then further caveats must be met.
7. The appeal site is clearly separated from the village of Clutton and the limited services and facilities that are situated there. A more substantial array of facilities, such as secondary schools and supermarkets, are situated further away in Midsomer Norton and Whitchurch, on the edge of Bristol. The Hunters Rest public house is situated close to the appeal site. However, in general terms, it is reasonable to conclude that the site is isolated from public services and community facilities.
8. Consideration must then be given to whether or not the site is unrelated to an established group of buildings. In this instance, the site is situated between the public house and a residential dwelling which is set within a large plot of land to the east. Beyond that dwelling is a small industrial estate, while there is also a collection of dwellings opposite the estate on King Lane and Clutton Hill. Furthermore, there is also a dwelling situated opposite the public house. With this in mind, it is clear that the appeal site is related to an established group of buildings. As such, the requirements of CS Policy RE6(5) are met. I therefore conclude that the existing buildings are suitable for conversion, taking account of the location of the site.
9. The Council has also found conflict with CS Policies DW1 and ST1, the relevant aspects of which seek to ensure that new development is located in sustainable locations where the use of public transport is encouraged. However, given that I have found conformity with the locational requirement of Policy RE6, Policies DW1 and ST1 are no longer relevant to the assessment of this case.

Other Matters

10. My consideration of this appeal is limited to certain matters. With regards to CS Policy RE6, I have therefore only assessed the proposal against part 5 in order to determine whether the site is in a suitable location. However, there are several other parts to the policy that would need to be satisfied, and these elements would need to be considered at the Technical Details Consent stage.
11. Matters related to construction management would also be considered at the Technical Details Consent stage.

Conditions

12. As set out within the PPG, it is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle.

Conclusion

13. The proposed development is in accordance with the development plan when considered as a whole. Having had regard to all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

C Butcher

INSPECTOR