



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 July 2025

by **Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 July 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W0340/W/25/3361998

Hunters Lodge, Brewery Common, Mortimer, Reading, Berkshire RG7 3RH

- 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 Mr Neil Kiley against the decision of West Berkshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/02278/PIP.
 - The development proposed is a single detached bungalow and garage, and creation of a new access onto Brewery Common Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for residential development comprising 1 dwelling at Hunters Lodge, Brewery Common, Mortimer, Reading, Berkshire RG7 3RH in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 24/02278/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 2 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. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. 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 main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises part of the gardens serving Hunters Lodge, a dwelling at the edge of Mortimer. Mortimer is identified as a Rural Service Centre by Policy SP3 of the West Berkshire Local Plan Review 2023-2041 (the LP), the policy continues on to describe these settlements as larger rural settlements that offer potential for development.

6. Although the appeal site is outside of the settlement boundary for Mortimer, it is closely related to the settlement and sits amongst other properties, including the host dwelling, that form a continuous addition to the settlement. Although settlement boundaries are a starting point, a judgement must be made on the situation as it stands on the ground. In this case, given its close relationship with the surrounding built up area, I find that the appeal site is both visually and functionally within the settlement of Mortimer. Consequently, for the purposes of this appeal, I have considered the appeal site to be within a settlement boundary where residential development is supported.
7. The proposal would result in a development that would align with the settlement hierarchy and locational strategy for residential development. As such, the location of the proposed development would be suitable for a new dwelling.
8. Although it is likely that the plans before me are not solely indicative, as the appeal is at the permission in principle stage the detailed appearance and layout of the plot is not directly for consideration. I can nevertheless consider the amount of development proposed. In this case, the proposal is modest in scale as it is only for a single dwelling that is limited in relation to the size of the plot. The amount of development proposed, including the associated boundaries, driveway and garage, would not be an urbanising feature detrimental to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and landscape. Moreover, given the width at the front of the plot it would be, when viewed from the road, comparable with the width of those more spacious plots.
9. The appeal site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, and the amount and use of the land proposed. The proposal would, therefore, comply with LP Policies SP1, SP3, SP7, SP8 and DM1 and Policies RS1 and GD1 of the Stratfield Mortimer Neighbourhood Development Plan. These collectively seek to direct development and protect the character and appearance of its surroundings and landscape.

Other Matters

10. Appeal decisions¹ have been brought to my attention relating to residential development outside of settlement boundaries and I note the comparisons made. I have not been provided with the full details and facts of these applications and decisions. Whilst other planning and appeal decisions are capable of being material considerations, all decisions turn on their own particular circumstances based on the facts and evidence before those decision-makers or Inspectors at the time. Therefore, I cannot make any meaningful comparisons to the appeal scheme before me, which I must consider on its own merits.

Conclusion

11. There are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above, I therefore conclude that the appeal is allowed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR

¹ References: T/APP/G0310/A/87/63600/P2 and APP/W0340/W/24/3352003