
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2025

by **Martin Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/W/24/3358029

Land adjacent to Sharsted, Botley Road, Curbridge SO30 2HB

- 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 C Goodson against the decision of Winchester City Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01107/OUT.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two in-fill dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Within its statement of case the Council has clarified that in regard to character and appearance matters, it takes issue with the effect of the presence of residential development on this site in principle, rather than the detailed design of the dwellings themselves. I have therefore made my decision on the same basis. Furthermore, the Council indicates that the reason for refusal in respect of the effect of the development on biodiversity is no longer pursued, and I have therefore not considered this further.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are whether the location of the proposal accords with the spatial strategy of the development plan, and the effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Policy MTRA3 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (adopted March 2013) provides that at settlements which have no clearly defined settlement boundary, of which Curbridge is identified as one, development will be permitted where it consists of infilling of a small site within a continuously developed road frontage, where this would be of a form compatible with the character of the village and not involve the loss of important gaps between developed areas. The reasoned justification for the policy also identifies that a key challenge is to allow some development to respond to local needs where appropriate and justified, whilst ensuring that this spatial area retains its overriding characteristics of being countryside with dispersed settlements of varying sizes.
5. The appeal site lies adjacent to the A3051 road and forms part of a parcel of land adjacent to an existing residential property. There are other dwellings located within the vicinity along the road, which are positioned in loose groupings.

However, these are generally set back from the road, with substantial frontage landscaping. The site lies between the properties of Sharsted and Curbridge Chapel, comprising a gap between them.

6. The scheme seeks to partially fill this gap. However, in my view, due to the length of the site along the road, this cannot be considered to be a small site as it extends to some 92 metres as set out by the appellant. While there is nothing in the policy to suggest what a small site is, this in my judgement is too large a gap to comprise a small site. Moreover, whether or not the site comprises a small gap, the arrangement of dwellings along this side of the road is such that there is not a continuously developed road frontage. There is a small grouping of dwellings to the south, with the single building and a further gap to the north. As such, the siting of buildings along the road is sporadic and not continuous. That this is a layout that is prevalent in other nearby areas does not convince me of the acceptability of the development at this location.
7. Given the layout and arrangement of buildings along this stretch of the road, there is a strong sense of rurality to the location and the substantial gaps between the buildings that are present reinforces this, as well as reinforcing that there is not a continuously developed frontage. The development of the appeal site would result in the closing of part of the gap that exists, and this would erode the rural nature of this location. Within this context, the gap can be considered to be important, in its contribution to the rural appearance of the locality. The very presence of new buildings at this location would be an intrusive and harmful addition that is at odds with the countryside nature of the locale.
8. As such, I find that the location of the proposal does not accord with the spatial strategy of the development plan, as set out in policy MTRA3. Additionally, the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with policies DM15, DM16 and DM23 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations (adopted April 2017), insofar as they seek to ensure that development respects the qualities that contribute to the distinctiveness of an area, responds positively to the character of an area and does not result in incongruous features in a rural area.

Other Matters

9. My attention is drawn to an example where three dwellings were permitted by the Council under the provisions of policy MTRA3, within what is a “larger” small site. However, it is clear from the information provided that the context of this site is different from that which is before me and that it was considered to be within a continually developed road frontage. Similarly, the case at Swarraton that I am referred to was stated to be within a continuously developed frontage. I have found that this is not the case with the appeal scheme and the development around the appeal site is more loosely arranged. None of the cited examples are directly comparable to the scheme before me and they do not lead me to find differently than I have above.
10. I note reference to a substantial amount of housebuilding that is taking place within the locality. However, this is visually distinct from the appeal site and is taking place on a strategic level. This housebuilding does not change the way in which the appeal site relates to other existing development within the area and has little influence on the rural appearance of the site. Thus, this does not alter my findings.

11. There has been reference to the need for mitigation in respect of the effect on the Solent coastline, including Special Protection Areas, and nitrate neutrality. However, as I am dismissing this appeal for other substantive reasons, I have not carried out an Appropriate Assessment in this case and I need not consider these matters further.
12. The appeal scheme would result in the delivery of housing, but the contribution in this respect would be limited and not sufficient to outweigh the harm.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR