



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 July 2025

by **D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/25/3359477

Wyke Down Farm, Walworth Road, Picket Piece, Andover SP11 6LX

- 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 P Read against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01436/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the change of use of the land from agricultural to B8 Storage and distribution to site 104 shipping containers on hard-standing.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the change of use of the land from agricultural to B8 Storage and distribution to site 104 shipping containers on hard-standing at Wyke Down Farm, Walworth Road, Picket Piece, Andover SP11 6LX in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 24/01436/FUL, subject to the conditions in the attached schedule.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - whether biodiversity net gains can be achieved.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises a large parcel of land that is mostly open and grassed but contains a small, agricultural style building. The site is accessed from Walworth Road, which is a short distance from Picket Piece, that is predominantly residential. There are pockets of commercial development between the appeal site and Picket Piece that include storage facilities, a pub, golf range and a caravan park. In the opposite direction of Walworth Road from the appeal site, the land is distinctly open and generally consists of agricultural fields with little development.
4. The appeal site is located close to the edge of the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (the National Landscape). Paragraph 187 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) seeks to ensure that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes. Paragraph 189 requires that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Landscapes.

5. The Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council's Landscape Character Assessment (May 2021) identifies the appeal site as being within landscape character area 11, Wyke Down. The key characteristics of this area are identified as a gently undulating landscape, mix of fields and also that the majority of the area has a remote, quiet and rural character.
6. The appeal site is well screened from views due to a dense hedgerow that lines the road. As a result, the proposed location, which would be close to the boundary would mean that there would be very limited views of any built form, which would be further reduced by enhanced landscaping and planting. Long-range views would be very limited, but there would be some short-range views, particularly due to the visibility splays that would be required as well as during the winter when hedgerows are not as dense.
7. The proposed development is required to be secure and as such it would be a compound, surrounded by fencing and hardstanding. While the short-range views would highlight the commercial aspect of the appeal site, this would be generally integrated with the other commercial developments nearby. As a result, it would not have a harmful effect on the open and rural character of the area, which is mostly appreciated after the appeal site, heading away from Picket Piece.
8. The key feature of the National Landscape is its openness, but the appeal site's location outside of the National Landscape, as well as its integration with the commercial development nearby would have little effect on openness. The appeal site is only a small section of the land, with the remainder being open which would continue to positively contribute to the National Landscape. The key characteristics of the landscape area would be maintained through the gently undulating landscape and mix of fields. While most of the area has a remote, quiet and rural character the appeal site's location near to commercial development is an exception in this description.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not harm the character and appearance of the area. I find no conflict with Policies EM1, EM10 and EP4 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 – 2029) Adopted May 2016 (LP), Paragraph 187 of the Framework and guidance contained within the Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees Supplementary Planning Document December 2018 (SPD). Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that proposals are sympathetic to the character and visual quality of the area, be of high quality and development proposals for economic uses should support the rural economy.

Biodiversity net gain

10. The Council state that insufficient information was provided with the application to confirm that biodiversity net gain (BNG) can be achieved. The appeal has been accompanied by the full statutory BNG metric which identified a post development BNG increase for habitat units and an increase for hedgerow units. The onsite BNG provision includes scrub creation and offsite provision is also proposed which includes hedgerow creation and restoration, native tree planting and neutral grassland.

11. The onsite provision is small in scale and would not be significant and thus would not require securing by condition or legal agreement. The small size of the appeal site means that most of the provision is to be secured offsite, on land within the appellants ownership. The Council consider that these offsite enhancements need to be secured by a legal agreement.
12. Under the statutory framework for BNG, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.
13. I note the Council's concern that the offsite arrangements are not secured, however, a legal agreement could be secured during the discharge of the biodiversity gain condition. As such, the absence of a legal agreement at this stage is not a sufficient reason to refuse the development and there is no reason why, if necessary, this could not be secured during the consideration of the biodiversity gain condition, and this would need to be satisfied before any development could take place.
14. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would achieve BNG. I find no conflict with Policy EM4 of the LP, Paragraph 187 of the Framework and guidance contained within the SPD. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure development provides net gains for biodiversity.

Other Matters

15. I note that concerns have been raised in regard to vehicle speeds on Walworth Road, however, the Council have found that the proposed development would not harm highway safety for which I have no reason to conclude otherwise,

Conditions

16. Condition 1 is the standard condition which relates to the commencement of development and condition 2 specifies the approved plans for the avoidance of doubt. Condition 3 requires the submission and approval of a landscaping scheme in order to protect the character and appearance of the area. Conditions 4 and 5 require details of materials to be used in hard and paved surfaces as well as types of boundary treatment in the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the area.
17. Condition 6 prevents lighting being installed without details first being submitted to and approved by the Council in order to protect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Condition 7 requires space to be laid out for the manoeuvring of vehicles before the use of the site commences in the interests of highway safety.

18. Conditions 8, 9 and 10 restrict construction hours, delivery times and prevent audible alarm systems being installed to protect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Condition 11 specifies the colour of the containers and condition 12 restricts the height that the containers can be stacked, both to protect the character and appearance of the area. Condition 13 specifies the hours that vehicles can load and unload when the site is in use to protect the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. Condition 14 ensures that the site shall be used for uses falling with Class B8 for the avoidance of doubt.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons given above the appeal should be allowed.

D Wilson

INSPECTOR

Schedule of Conditions

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this planning permission.
2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:

Location Plan – drawing no. 7377.001 Revision A

Floor Plan, Site Plan and Elevations – drawing no.7377.001 Revision C

3. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a scheme of landscaping which shall specify species, planting sizes, spacing and numbers of trees/shrubs to be planted (including replacement trees where appropriate). The works approved shall be carried out in the first planting and seeding seasons following when the use hereby permitted is commenced. In addition, a maintenance programme detailing all operations to be carried out in order to allow successful establishment of planting, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, to be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
4. No development shall commence on site until details of the materials to be used for hard and paved surfacing have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The approved surfacing shall be completed before the adjoining buildings are first occupied and thereafter maintained.
5. No development shall take place until there has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority a plan indicating the positions, design, materials and type of screen walls/fences/hedges to be erected. The approved screen walls/fences shall be erected before the use hereby approved has commenced and shall subsequently be maintained. Any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the date of planting, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of similar size and species, details of which shall be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority before replacement occurs.
6. No lighting shall be installed at the application site until details of any lighting, including hours of operation and method for controlling light pollution, have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The equipment shall thereafter be operated and maintained in accordance with the approved scheme.
7. The use of the site hereby permitted shall not commence until space has been laid out and provided for the manoeuvring of vehicles to enable them to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in accordance with the approved plan (Floor Plan, Site Plan and Elevations – drawing no.7377.001 Revision C) and these spaces shall thereafter be reserved for such purposes at all times.

8. No work relating to the construction of the development hereby approved, including works of demolition or preparation prior to operations, or internal painting or fitting out, shall take place before the hours of 07.30 nor after 18.00 Monday to Friday, before the hours of 08.00 nor after 13.00 Saturdays nor on Sundays or recognised public holidays.
9. No deliveries of construction materials or plant and machinery and no removal of any spoil from the site shall take place before the hours of 07.30 nor after 18.00 Monday to Friday, before the hours of 08.00 nor after 13.00 Saturdays nor on Sundays or recognised public holidays, unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.
10. No internal or external audible alarm systems shall be installed on or within the new commercial site or on/within shipping containers hereby approved.
11. The containers shall be finished with a dark green paint or a colour that shall have been first agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.
12. The storage of containers hereby permitted shall not be stored or stacked above a maximum height of 2.6m from the adjacent ground level.
13. The hours of loading and unloading vehicles shall be restricted to 08.00 - 19.00 hours Monday to Sunday, including bank holidays.
14. The application site shall be used for uses falling with Class B8 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987(as amended) or in any statutory instrument revoking and re-enacting the Order with or without modification and shall not be used for any other purpose.