



Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 5 August 2025

by **C Billings BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 September 2025

Appeal A Ref: APP/J3720/W/25/3365935

The Paddocks, Shuckburgh Road, Napton on the Hill CV47 8NL

- 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 Adrian Dollar against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/03454/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of buildings 1 and 2 comprising storage units and associated yard area (retrospective).
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Appeal B Ref: APP/J3720/W/25/3365936

The Paddocks, Shuckburgh Road, Napton on the Hill CV47 8NL

- 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 Adrian Dollar against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00002/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of buildings 3 and 5 comprising storage units and associated yard area (retrospective)
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Appeal C Ref: APP/J3720/W/25/3365938

The Paddocks, Shuckburgh Road, Napton on the Hill CV47 8NL

- 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 Adrian Dollar against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/03455/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of building 4 comprising storage units and associated yard area (retrospective)
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Appeal D Ref: APP/J3720/W/25/3365939

The Paddocks, Shuckburgh Road, Napton on the Hill CV47 8NL

- 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 Adrian Dollar against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/03456/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of buildings 6 and 7 comprising storage units and associated yard area (retrospective)
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Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.
3. Appeal C is dismissed.
4. Appeal D is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

5. As set out above, there are four appeals on the wider site. Each appeal proposal relates to different buildings and the buildings differ in size, design and location. However, all of the buildings share the same vehicular access, are already in situ and, as noted by the appellant, are currently let as storage units for private hire. Additionally, the same reasons for refusal were given for all four of the appeal schemes and the same relevant development plan policies apply. Therefore, to avoid duplication, I have dealt with the appeal schemes together, except where otherwise indicated and on the basis that the appeal scheme has already been built and is in use. Where I refer to the development, I mean all of the new development comprised within appeals A- D inclusive, unless otherwise specified.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:
- whether the appeal development would be in a suitable location, having regard to the development strategy for the area; and,
 - the effect of the appeal development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Location

7. Policy AS.10 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy (July 2016) (CP) sets out that in the open countryside, all proposals will be thoroughly assessed against the principles of sustainable development, having regard to certain criteria. Also, it sets out that certain forms of development and uses are acceptable in principle in the countryside, including in respect of business, the small-scale expansion of an existing group of buildings, where the site is readily accessible by means of transport other than the private car and, an extension to a business in an established location, particularly if it would be unreasonable to expect the business to relocate in order to expand.
8. Strategic objective 13 and Policy CS.22 of the CP and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) generally support the expansion of existing businesses. Furthermore, Objective 2 of the Napton-on-the-Hill Neighbourhood Development Plan (July 2021) (NDP) is to promote and enhance local business opportunities to support a vibrant rural economy. Also, Policy 4 of the NDP supports business and economic development, providing certain criteria is met.
9. The evidence provided sets out that the part of the wider site and original business operations have changed and expanded over the years. This has included permission granted for new buildings as well as the conversion of existing buildings, which supported the expansion of the original existing business.
10. The appeal buildings are used for storage purposes, related to the existing business operations and use of other buildings within the wider site. Although, such B8 storage use of the appeal buildings is not a typical rural use, that needs to be located in such a countryside location. Also, privately let individual storage

units are not intrinsically linked in terms of their use and so there is no particular necessity for them to be co-located in this location in the countryside to support the rural economy.

11. In combination, the expansion of the appellants' business as part of the development schemes, including the new buildings and areas of associated hardstanding is significant in area and built form, particularly in regard to existing permitted development. The appeal buildings vary in height and bulk and their external materials are generally recessive, with some of the appeal buildings set within the land topography and below the height of the wider boundary vegetation. However, all of the appeal schemes involve expanding the existing business' site area further beyond existing permitted buildings, in at least one direction and include areas of hardstanding related thereto. Consequently, even taken individually and having regard to land levels, the design of the buildings and existing vegetation, the appeal schemes expand built form onto land that was previously open within the countryside.
12. Therefore, in regard to the type of activities and scale of the new development, and the location and nature of the site, there is no overriding support for the proposals derived from Policy CS.22 of the CP in this instance. Although, I will consider the impact of the appeal development on the character of the surrounding area, including the landscape character further below.
13. The appeal development is sufficient distance away from nearby residential properties and is for storage purposes, which would not typically involve noisy activities. Therefore, it is unlikely the new development causes significant levels of noise and disturbance to the occupiers of nearby properties. The Transport Statement demonstrates that the combined traffic movement associated with the new storage buildings does not result in a material increase in traffic volumes compared to the existing business at The Paddocks. Furthermore, the site access is from a main A-road, rather than a rural lane and no objections have been raised by the local highway authority. Therefore, the appeal schemes, even in combination, cause no harmful impact to the local area in terms of traffic increase and highway safety.
14. However, even though B8 storage units typically store more bulky items, not conducive to travelling via public transport, no substantive details have been provided in regard to public transport accessibility to the site. Also, even if the appeal schemes do not involve the loss of large areas of higher quality agricultural land, it has not been demonstrated that the development prioritises the re-use of brownfield land and existing buildings. Therefore, based on the evidence provided, all the principles of sustainable development set out in Policy AS.10 are not met by the appeal schemes, individually or cumulatively.
15. The new development supports the expansion of an existing business and will provide some economic benefits. Although, the incremental expansion with the construction of several new buildings, spreading across in directions beyond existing built form and involving significant areas of hardstanding and substantial expansion of the established business, would not align with the overall objectives and policy intentions of the CP and NDP in this instance. Particularly when having regard to previous permissions that have already allowed some expansion of the established business.

16. Even though the business is in an established location, that the appeal sites are on land owned by the appellant and, it is advanced that this is intrinsically linked to the ongoing viability and operational continuity of the existing business, no substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate such. Additionally, no substantive evidence has been provided to justify why it is unreasonable to expect the existing business to relocate in order to expand further. Furthermore, it has not been demonstrated why the businesses' functional integrity could not be maintained either elsewhere or on disaggregated sites, partly at the established site and part elsewhere, while still serving the demand for storage facilities.
17. The Framework sets out that decisions should recognise that to meet local business needs in rural areas, this may have to be found beyond existing settlements, and in locations that are not well served by public transport. However, the evidence provided does not demonstrate that the appeal schemes meet local business needs of this rural location and that local demand is met in respect of privately let storage units, even though the uptake to let the units has been successful to date.
18. Having regard to the above, the new development cumulatively and/or individually is not in a suitable location, having regard to the development strategy for the area. Therefore, the proposals conflict with Policies CS.15, CS.22 and AS.10 of the CP and Policies 4 and 10 of the NDP, which amongst other matters, promote development in sustainable urban areas and settlements that meet local needs, only supporting expansion of business in their existing locations subject to the scale and type of activities involved, the location and nature of the site and, in respect of Policy AS.10, where it would be unreasonable to expect the business to relocate in order to expand.

Character and appearance

19. The appeal sites lie in the open countryside and the Ironstone Hill Fringe Special Landscape Area (SLA), within the Lias Village Farmland landscape character area. The SLA study sets out that the key qualities of such area include a rolling landscape, medium to large scale regular hedged field pattern, nucleated settlement patterns of large and small villages and wide unspoilt views of the Feldon Clay Vale to the north from viewpoints.
20. There is some visual containment of the wider site, due to vegetation along the compound ownership boundaries and some of the appeal buildings are seen against other buildings. Although, I observed during my site visit, that the upper parts and roofs of some of the appeal buildings are visible from the nearby public right of way (PRoW), along with other elements of the wider compound, which, as asserted by the Council, do not benefit from planning permission. Buildings 1, 2, 3 and 5 are particularly more visible in the landscape from public vantage points.
21. Additionally, even though the development does not extend beyond the wider field boundaries of the site, it encroaches into the open countryside, reducing the openness of the parcel of land. This alters the distinctive field pattern of the SLA through the increased intensity of built form within the field parcel. Furthermore, the appeal development interrupts the rolling countryside, harmfully altering

prominent public views, in particular of the Feldon Clay Vale, on descending the PRow across the adjacent agricultural field leading down from Butt Hill.

22. The appeal buildings, except for building 7, extend built-form closer to the open fields in the direction towards Napton-on-the-Hill than existing permitted buildings on the wider site. This, together with the cumulative impact of the extent of built form and reduced openness caused by the development, affects the setting of the nearby village settlement and views therefrom, which is seen from a rural, predominately agricultural open countryside setting. As a result, the development harmfully affects such notable characteristic of villages in the SLA.
23. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LIVA) and the appellants further comments on the Council's landscape officer response assesses the four appeal schemes as a whole. This identifies the overall sensitivity of the site as low and that from the majority of viewpoints assessed, in their opinion, there would be a neutral impact. However, even though there is some disparity of opinions between the Council's and appellants' landscape specialists, the appeal development harmfully expands the extent of built form by a substantial amount.
24. Even if the wider historic field pattern has not been breached by the appeal development, aerial imagery provided shows that a considerable amount of green field and other vegetation has been removed from the wider site over the years, including to accommodate the appeal development and other development that the Council assert is not permitted. This extent of change and resultant urbanisation of the wider site detracts from the visual and spatial character of the area, even if this is visually more localised in part, due to vegetation and other existing buildings in the wider site.
25. That there are other developments, including the Napton Marina and Crossroads Garage not that far away, does not discernibly reduce the visual and spatial impact of the appeal development. Furthermore, the non-native vegetation planted to the wider site boundaries does not provide a particular positive contribution to the key qualities and characteristics of the SLA and typical landscape characteristics of the area. Even if part of the development sits well against the setting of the established business and buildings, further new planting could be introduced and the external materials of the buildings is recessive, the extent of expansion of the business, cumulatively or individually intensifies built form in the open countryside. Therefore, the development has a harmful urbanising effect on this part of the rural landscape, appearing anomalous in the open countryside and detrimentally intrusive to the high landscape value and characteristics of the area.
26. In view of the above, the appeal development has a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Therefore, there is conflict with Policies CS.5, CS.9, CS.12 and AS.10 of the CP and Policies 4, 9 and 10 of the NDP. These policies, amongst other matters, seek to protect and/or enhance landscape character and quality, including the special character and appearance of SLAs, openness of the countryside and public views and vistas.

Other Matters

27. The lack of objections from consultees with regard to ecology, licensing, highways, environmental health, fire and rescue and infrastructure include matters that are neutral factors in terms of my findings on the main issues.
28. The application submissions predate when the mandatory requirements for 10% biodiversity net gain. Therefore, I have not needed to consider such matter further.

Conclusion

29. All of the appeal schemes conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the Framework, which indicate that the development should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
30. Accordingly, for the reasons given above, appeals A, B, C and D should be dismissed.

C Billings

INSPECTOR