



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 August 2025

by **A Hickey MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/25/3364276

Land at Vicarage Lane, East Haddon, Northampton NN6 8DA

- 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 Patrick Punch against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2024/4047/FULL.
 - The development proposed is construction of 1 no. self build dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The third reason for refusal set out in the Council's decision notice related to highway safety concerns. The Council has confirmed in its statement of case that they are no longer seeking to defend this matter. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on that basis.
3. During the appeal process, both the main parties were provided the opportunity to comment on the findings of the Inspector in relation to an appeal¹ at land to the east of Forest Road, Piddington (Piddington appeal), insofar as it related to the Council's self-build figures. I have considered the responses as part of my findings.
4. The appellant has submitted a planning obligation which seeks to secure the development as self or custom build. Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended) (CIL Regulations) and paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) set out three tests that planning obligations must meet.
5. I am satisfied that the obligation is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms to secure a self build dwelling. It is directly related to the development proposal and is fairly and reasonably related in scale and kind to the development. I am therefore satisfied that the planning obligation would meet the requirements of the CIL Regulations and the Framework and have taken it into consideration as part of the determination of the appeal.

Main Issues

6. The main issues are:

¹ Ref: APP/W2845/W/24/3353512

- the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
- whether the appeal site is in a suitable location having regard to its location in the countryside and the provisions of the development plan;

Reasons

Character and appearance

7. The appeal site comprises a parcel of land to the rear of a row of dwellings on Main Street, with the access being from Vicarage Lane. Nearby dwellings on this side and section of Main Street are largely historic with thatched and slate steeply pitched roofs of two and two and a half storeys. Gaps between the buildings reveal the narrow gable walls that are unbroken or contain small window openings, allowing for an appreciation of these traditional buildings, which appear to form the original pattern of development for the settlement.
8. Access would be taken from an existing opening to the east that leads on to an open grassed area that the appellant states has been used as a garden. The site is bounded by walls, fencing and soft landscaping of properties on Main Street to the north of the site. The boundary of a property on Vicarage Lane also encloses a small section of the access. An existing elongated metal outbuilding forms the western boundary of the site, which is to be retained as part of the proposal. Except for the outbuilding, the nearby built development sits close to existing roads and is generally linear. The position of these dwellings and existing boundaries defines the edge of the settlement, with the majority of the appeal site appearing more visually associated with the open fields to the south.
9. The proposed 1.5 and single-storey dwelling would see a mix of styles with contemporary and traditional features, whilst also being sited at an elevated level. It would be formed of two distinct but linked parts, a single-storey living flat-roofed section and a 1.5-storey thatched roof section. The proposal would also incorporate significant areas of glazing on its elevations and on both sections of the roof.
10. Whilst positioned close to existing boundaries, its elevated position and layout outside of the built form of the settlement, combined with its complex design incorporating numerous design features, including large, glazed areas, would result in a conspicuous dwelling that unsympathetically extends the historic settlement boundary. A residential property here of the design proposed would also, almost inevitably, have a significant influence on the open countryside, especially outside of daylight hours when there is likely to be substantial outward light spill from the appeal site.
11. Moreover, its elevated position and roof forms, combined with its blended design and footprint, would jar with the more traditionally designed buildings and gardens which are typical of the immediate area. The development in the form proposed would result in an incongruous feature in the area that is neither in keeping with nearby built form or the open countryside it opens onto. As such, it would not represent an effective use of the land.
12. The appellant contends that the appeal scheme should be considered to be of exceptional quality and of innovative design. Whilst I do not dispute that the

proposed dwelling with its blended design is of architectural merit in its own right, I do not consider it to be of an exceptional design as it would fail to assimilate with its surroundings. In regard to being innovative, combining traditional and modern styles is not uncommon, and I find that it has not been adequately demonstrated what makes this particular scheme different from other forms of development that may have taken this approach.

13. There are two nearby Grade II listed buildings close to the appeal site, The Thatched House and 4 and 5, Main Street. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the decision maker, in considering whether to grant planning permission for the development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any feature of special architectural or historic interest. The Framework requires that great weight should be given to the conservation of designated heritage assets.
14. 4 and 5, Main Street, dating from the mid-18th century and Thatched House, dating from the mid-17th century, significance lies in their street position, form and architecture allowing an understanding of the historic development of the settlement along the main route through it. Given the position of these heritage assets, the separation distance to the appeal site and the intervening landscaping, means that their significance would not be affected by the appeal proposal. The Council makes the same conclusion.
15. For the above reasons, the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, and conflicts with the Daventry District Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) (LPP2) Policies RA2 and RA6. These policies, amongst other things, require developments to recognise the intrinsic character, beauty and tranquillity of the open countryside and protect the form, character and setting of villages.

Suitable location

16. The Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended) (the Act) places a duty on relevant authorities to give suitable development permission to enough suitable serviced plots of land to meet the demand for self-build and custom housebuilding in their area. The level of demand is established through the number of entries on a register the relevant authority is also under a duty to keep.
17. Policy R1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (LPP1) sets out the spatial strategy specifically for rural areas and states that development in the rural areas will be guided by a rural settlement hierarchy. The main parties agree that East Haddon is a Secondary Service Village for the purposes of Policy R1.
18. LPP2 Policy RA2 sets out circumstances where development outside the defined confines of the village would be acceptable. The appellant has stated that the Council's reference to Policy RA2 in the second reason for refusal relates to criteria i) and iii) of Part C, and I see no reason to disagree.
19. LPP2 Policy RA6 states that the intrinsic character, beauty and tranquillity of the open countryside will be recognised. The policy also provides a list of the forms of development that will be supported in the open countryside outside of the confines of villages.

20. The eastern section of the appeal site falls within the defined settlement boundary of East Haddon. The majority of the appeal site falls outside of the defined boundary but abuts it on three sides. Nonetheless, given that the majority of the site falls outside the defined boundary, it is therefore within the open countryside for the purposes of the development plan and settlement hierarchy.
21. The proposal would see the creation of one self-build dwelling located on the edge of East Haddon. As the proposed dwelling would be located close to other dwellings and buildings, it would not result in an isolated dwelling in the countryside for the purposes of the Framework.
22. The Council's latest delivery position on self and custom builds is set out in the Self and Custom Build Annual Monitoring Report 2024 (SCBR 2024), which I have been provided with as part of the appeal. The appellant raises concerns that not all the referenced planning permissions have in fact been delivered as self and custom builds. The appellant has provided several appeal decisions in both the Planning and Appeal statements to support their case.
23. Having regard to the guidance in the Framework, Planning Practice Guidance and the evidence presented by both the main parties, including the Piddington appeal, there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that all of the planning permissions referred to in the SCBR 2024 would be delivered as self-build or custom housing. I therefore find that it is not sufficiently clear whether there have been enough grants of planning permission for self-build and custom plots to ensure the need is being met.
24. Being mindful of the requirements of the Act, the appeal scheme would contribute one self-build plot, secured by a planning obligation, which would help to meet the demand for self-build plots. However, for the reasons outlined above, it would harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not follow best practice in design even if there were some environmental improvements from the scheme.
25. The appeal scheme was verbally presented to the Parish Council. However, in the absence of cogent evidence of any further consultation undertaken by the Parish Council or the appellant within the wider community and given that only a small number of nearby properties were consulted, I am unconvinced that this approach constitutes an effective community involvement exercise as required by Policy R1.
26. For the reasons set out above, whilst I have found a need for self and custom build dwellings within the authority, the appeal scheme would be contrary to the development plan for homes in the countryside as set out in LPP1 Policies SA and R1 and Policies RA2 and RA6 of the LPP2.
27. As the appeal scheme is for full planning permission of one dwellinghouse it would not conflict with LPP2 Policy HO5, as this relates to outline applications of more than one dwelling.

Other Matters

28. I note the other concerns that third parties have raised, but given my findings on the main issues, it is not necessary for me to consider these further as it would not lead me to a different decision.

29. There would be small general economic and social benefits from the construction and occupation of a single dwelling close to the village, which I give moderate weight. There would also be environmental benefits from the energy efficiency of the dwelling and landscaping. However, given the scale of the scheme, these benefits would be small. A lack of harm in other regards is a neutral factor weighing neither for nor against the development.
30. In line with the Government's aim to boost the supply of housing, including for those wishing to commission or build their own homes, the proposal would add one additional dwelling to the supply of self-build and custom build accommodation. The proposal would therefore only make a small contribution in addressing the shortfall in self-build provision. This therefore limits the weight I attribute to this matter in favour of the appeal scheme.

Planning Balance

31. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act provides that the appeal should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
32. While I have found that a need exists for self and custom build plots, for the reasons outlined above, the location of the proposal would conflict with the Council's development strategy for the location of new housing. The spatial strategy of the development plan is largely consistent with the provisions of the Framework, which sets out the need to plan positively and set out a clear overall strategy for the pattern and scale of places for the provision of new homes. Additionally, the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Taken together, I attach significant harm to these matters.
33. In view of the above, I am also mindful that the Council has a sufficient housing land supply. Whilst there is a need for self and custom build housing that weighs in favour of the proposed development, in my judgement, the provision of one self build dwelling and additional limited benefits is not sufficient to outweigh the harm I have found. The proposed development would therefore conflict with the development plan when taken as a whole, and material considerations do not indicate that the decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

34. For the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Hickey

INSPECTOR