



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2025

by **Lewis Condé BSc, MSc, MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/25/3367365

Land Adjacent Lovedays Farmhouse, Baughurst Road, Baughurst, Tadley, RG26 5SS

- 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 Wolverton Park Estate against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/02875/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Erection of 5 no bedroom dwellinghouse and detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development has been taken from the appeal form and Council's decision notice, as opposed to the original application form, as this provides the most accurate description of the proposal.
3. Following the appellant's submission of arboricultural evidence, the Council has confirmed that the proposal would not cause harm to trees and has therefore withdrawn its fifth reason for refusal. I have no robust reasons to reach an alternative view.
4. On the date that the planning application was determined, a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) (December 2024) was published, alongside a Written Ministerial Statement (WMS) entitled '*Building the homes we need*'. Both main parties have had an appropriate opportunity to consider the implications of these on the appeal scheme.

Main Issues

5. In light of the above, the main issues are:
 - whether the appeal site is a suitable location for housing with specific regard to the Council's spatial strategy and access to facilities and services;
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the appeal site is a suitable location for the proposed development having regard to surface water flood risk

Reasons

Suitable Location

6. Policy SS1 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029 (the Local Plan) establishes the Council's spatial strategy for housing delivery. The policy generally directs new housing to locations within existing settlement policy boundaries (SPB) or on-sites allocated within the development plan. The policy does allow for residential developments to be permitted outside of defined SPB, but only where it would comply with exception criteria established elsewhere in the Local Plan.
7. Despite the presence of neighbouring residential properties, the appeal site is situated in a rural setting, a considerable distance outside of any defined SPB. In planning policy terms, it is within the open countryside, as defined under the Local Plan.
8. Local Plan Policy SS6 identifies a limited set of exceptions whereby new housing development in the countryside would be supported. Of relevance to the appeal proposal is criterion (e), which permits small scale residential proposals of a scale and type to meet a locally agreed need.
9. The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, which is a matter that I will return to as part of my planning balance below. However, the exception under Policy SS6(e) is specific in that it relates to a locally agreed need for dwellings, as opposed to general housing needs across the authority area. The policy's supporting text further sets out the expectations for demonstrating the local need for certain scale and types of homes. The policy does not include any provision for self-builds within the exception.
10. No robust evidence has been provided to demonstrate that the proposal would satisfy an identified local need, as such, it does not meet the exception at SS6(e). Additionally, the proposal has not been demonstrated to accord with any of the other exceptions for new dwellings in the countryside outlined under Policy SS6.
11. Furthermore, any future occupants of the proposed dwelling are likely to have travel requirements to access facilities and services. From the evidence before me and my observations on site, services and facilities that would sustain day-to-day living are located a significant distance from the appeal site. The site is also not well served by nearby public transport options.
12. Roads within the nearby vicinity are rural in character being predominantly unlit and enclosed by boundary hedging, without separate footpath provision, and limited surveillance. The distances involved, together with the context of the surrounding highway network, is likely to deter most future residents from walking or cycling to access facilities or services. Moreso, in periods of bad weather or darkness. Consequently, sustainable methods of travel are unlikely to be routinely used, with future occupants highly likely to be reliant on the private car. This is the least sustainable means of transport and would further undermine the Council's spatial strategy.
13. The Framework recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas. However, I find the site's context would not provide realistic opportunity for future residents to utilise sustainable means of transport. Regardless of whether or not the site is in an isolated location

having regard to nearby built form, it remains that the appeal site lacks suitable access to facilities and services, including public transport options. Furthermore, the provision of electric vehicle charging points within the site, would not overcome the dependency on the use of private motor vehicles.

14. The appeal site therefore does not provide a suitable location for housing having regard to the Council's spatial strategy and given its poor access to local facilities and services. As such the proposal would conflict with Local Plan Policies SS1, SS6 and CN9. Together amongst other matters, these policies set out the Council's spatial strategy for development and seek for new development to minimise the need to travel, promote opportunities for sustainable transport modes and improve accessibility to services.
15. The Council's decision notice also refers to Local Plan Policy SD1, which relates to a presumption in favour of sustainable development and closely reflects Paragraph 11 of the Framework. At the time of determination, the Council identified that it could demonstrate an appropriate housing land supply, but this no longer remains the case. As such, whether the proposal complies with Policy SD1 will form part of my final planning balance.

Character and Appearance

16. The appeal site is part of a sizeable field and predominantly consists of open grassland with mature trees and hedgerows along much of its boundaries. It lies outside but adjacent to the North Wessex Downs National Landscape (the National Landscape). Farmland and woodland dominate the National Landscape, and as such, are defining characteristics of it as highlighted within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Management Plan 2019 – 2024 (the Management Plan). Notably, in preserving the character and scenic beauty of the National Landscape, the Management Plan emphasises the important of preserving field patterns.
17. The site sits beside the public highway, set behind a mature hedgerow. The surrounding area is largely characterised by irregular patterns of open fields, enclosed by boundary vegetation, alongside various pockets of woodland. The above factors together with the limited presence of residential development, that is laid out in a highly sporadic manner, result in the surrounding area having an inherently verdant, quiet, rural character. In this context, I find the appeal site to make a modest but nonetheless, positive contribution to the landscape character of the area, including the setting of the adjacent National Landscape.
18. The existing field is undeveloped and agricultural in nature. The proposal would sub-divide the parcel of land and largely replace it with a sizeable two-storey dwelling, ancillary outbuilding/garage and hard surfacing. The existing entrance to the field would be upgraded with surfacing for vehicular access and parking space added within the site. Additional areas of garden would also likely attract domestic paraphernalia. The proposal would therefore urbanise and erode the site's quiet rural character. The retention of and introduction of further landscaping may be capable of softening the effects of the proposed development, but it remains that the open and rural quality of the appeal site would largely be lost.
19. The wider streetscene consists of intermittent housing to both sides of the road, that vary in style and design. The appearance of the proposed dwelling would closely reflect a neighbouring property, in particular through its scale, materiality

and detailing. The proposal would therefore not appear as an isolated feature within the landscape, nor entirely out of character with its surroundings. Views of the proposal would also be localised. Nevertheless, the predominant character of the area is of countryside and agricultural land is an important feature of this. As such, the introduction of residential built form on the site would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, albeit the level of harm would be modest.

20. The appeal site's rural character is complimentary to the adjacent National Landscape, and given their very close relationship, the appeal scheme would also cause harm to the setting of the National Landscape. Although such harm would be limited, having regard to my statutory duty¹, I find the proposal would neither conserve nor enhance the natural beauty of the National Landscape.
21. Bringing the above together, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, there would be conflict with Local Plan Policies SS6, EM1 and EM10, which together permit high quality, design-led development that respects, enhances and is not detrimental to the character or visual amenity of the landscape.

Flood Risk

22. Since the determination of the application, the Environment Agency (EA) has updated its surface water flood risk maps, which indicate a reduce risk from surface water flooding across the site compared to the findings of the Council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2021). Nonetheless, even accounting for the EA's updated mapping, the proposed access an egress to the site would remain within an area at high risk of surface water flooding.
23. Paragraph 175 of the Framework establishes that the sequential test should be used in areas known to be at risk now or in the future from any form of flooding, except in situations where a site-specific flood risk assessment demonstrates that no built development within the site boundary, including access or escape routes, and raising or other potentially vulnerable elements, would be located on an area that would be at risk of flooding from any source, now and in the future (having regard to potential changes in flood risk).
24. The aim of the sequential test is to first steer development away from areas at risk of flooding. The Planning Practice Guidance is clear that even where a flood risk assessment shows the development can be made safe throughout its lifetime without increasing risk elsewhere, the sequential test still needs to be satisfied. This is due to the sequential approach being deemed the most effective way of addressing flood risk, as it places the least reliance on measures to mitigate the risks of flooding.
25. Consequently, even if, measures could be incorporated into the design of the proposed development to ensure safe access/egress and mitigate the risk of surface water flooding, this does not obviate the need for the proposal to firstly pass the sequential test.
26. Despite only a small extent of the appeal site being shown by the EA's latest mapping to be at risk from surface water flooding, no robust reasons why the proposal should not be subject to the sequential test have been provided.

¹ Duty under section 85(1) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, as amended by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023.

27. In the absence of a sequential test, it has not been demonstrated that the appeal site is a suitable location for the proposed development and that there are no suitable available alternative sites at a lower risk of flooding. The appeal scheme therefore conflicts with Local Plan Policy EM7, which seeks to manage flood risk including through applying a sequential approach to development in areas of flood risk, in line with national guidance.

Other Matters

28. I have very limited details of the various appeal decisions referenced by the appellant. However, from the evidence presented it appears that there are likely to be significant contextual differences to the current appeal scheme, for instance, in terms of site-specific characteristics as well as the extent of development proposed. As such, the appeal decisions have not influenced the weight that I have given to the benefits of the current appeal scheme.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

29. The proposal would provide socio-economic benefits associated with the delivery and subsequent occupation of a new self-build dwelling. This would align with the Framework's aim of boosting the supply of housing nationally, an aim given impetus in the WMS. Indeed, the Framework recognises the importance that small and medium sized sites can play in contributing to an area's housing supply, including the potential for prompt delivery. Although only a single dwelling, given there is a substantial shortfall in housing supply across the authority area at present, said to be 2.94 years, the benefits associated with the provision of a new dwelling attract moderate weight.
30. The bio-diversity enhancements that the proposal would provide are a benefit that attracts only limited weight due to the scale of the proposal and their likely extent. The proposal's design may incorporate a high standard of energy efficiency, but this has not been robustly demonstrated or quantified, such that I give this matter negligible weight. Meanwhile, compliance with other development plan policies including in respect of highway safety or providing suitable living conditions for existing and future residents, are neutral matters in the planning balance.
31. Through being contrary with development plan policies that set out the spatial strategy for new development, as well as policies that seek to protect the natural environment, including by avoiding development in areas of flood risk, the proposal conflicts with the development plan.
32. Given the Council's stated housing land supply position, it acknowledges that its strategic policies relating to the location of new housing are out-of-date. I have therefore reduced the weight that I give to these policies, while Paragraph 11d of the Framework is therefore engaged.
33. I have set out above why I consider the scheme would result in inappropriate development in a flood risk area and would cause harm to the setting of a National Landscape. The application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance therefore provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply, whilst the appeal scheme also conflicts with Local Plan Policy SD1.

34. For the reasons outlined above, the appeal scheme conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no material considerations, including the approach of the Framework, that justify a decision other than in accordance with it. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

Lewis Condé

INSPECTOR