



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 August 2025

by **E Worley BA (Hons) Dip EP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C1625/W/25/3358535

Car Park Land, North West of Box Road, Cam GL11 5FB

- 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 John-Rhys Davies on behalf of Wain Homes (Severn Valley) against the decision of Stroud District Council.
 - The application Ref is S.24/0585/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the construction of five dwellings on former car park and associated infrastructure and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the proposal would make adequate provision for affordable housing;
 - whether the car park is necessary in the interest of sustainable travel and highway safety; and
 - the effect of the layout of the proposed development on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises an area of land off Box Road, with newly constructed dwellings to the rear and both sides. Planning permission for the use of the site as an overflow car park with 42 spaces, along with a second car park with 20 spaces, to serve Cam and Dursley Railway Station, was granted as part of the neighbouring residential development. At the time of my site visit, the area, which is enclosed by fencing, was being used for the storage of building materials and parking for contractors. The existing planting to the front boundary of the site, between the hardstanding of the car park and the highway, continues along Box Road on either side of the site. The retention of the intervening tree and hedge planting between the new residential development and the highway, which reflects the roadside hedge on the opposite side of Box Road, makes a positive contribution to the semi-rural character of this part of Box Road. The appeal proposal would see the construction of 5 dwellings on the land in lieu of the proposed car park.

4. Notwithstanding the location of the site, opposite an area of open countryside and on the fringes of the settlement, the contribution it currently makes towards any sense of openness to the character and appearance of the area is limited by its current and proposed use for parking of vehicles and relatively contained nature. Moreover, given this context, while the site comprises a break in the frontage development along this stretch of Box Road, new residential development at the site would not be at odds with the residential character and appearance of the immediately surrounding area.
5. The plot sizes and resulting density of the development would not be dissimilar to that of the nearby dwellings. However, by virtue of the number of units and the resulting proposed layout of the development, the 2 storey built form of the dwellings would project beyond the front elevations of the adjoining residential development on either side of the site, which is set back from the highway to the front. Consequently, the layout of the proposal would be at odds with the prevailing pattern of the built form and would appear as an anomalous feature in the street scene. The retention of the existing planting to the front boundary of the site could soften the effects of the development in that regard.
6. The Tree Constraints Plan which forms part of the appellant's Tree Schedule¹ is dated February 2017 and is therefore of some age. It sets out that the group of trees to the front boundary of the site (G1) includes semi mature Ash, Hawthorn, Hazel, Field Maple, of average physiological condition, with an RPA Radius of 2.1m, and the field boundary hedgerow (H1) comprises semi mature Hawthorn and Hazel. However, the plan indicates that group G1 are not on the topographical survey and their locations have been approximated using a scaled aerial photograph combined with measurements taken on site. Consequently, in the absence of an accurate and detailed Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), to identify the number and position of the existing trees and hedgerow planting, together with the extent of the root protection areas, I cannot be certain the position of the proposed dwellings and associated development would not threaten the health and long-term wellbeing of the existing boundary planting, the loss of which would increase the visual prominence of the development and diminish the character and appearance of the area.
7. I note the appellant's willingness to accept a planning condition to require the submission of an AIA, including hedge protection measures. However, given that such details may find that the development could not be accommodated on the site in the form proposed without detriment to the existing boundary trees and hedgerow, it would not be appropriate to address this matter through the imposition of a planning condition.
8. Thus, in the absence of any robust evidence to the contrary, I am unable to conclude with any certainty that the proposal would not have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the aims of Policy ES8 of the Stroud District Local Plan, adopted November 2015 (SDLP) which sets out that development that would result in the unacceptable loss of, or damage to, or threaten the continued well-being of protected trees, hedgerows, (including those that are not protected but are considered to be worthy of protection) will not be permitted, and the combined aims of Policies CAMES1

¹ BS 5837:2012 Tree Schedule: Box Road, Cam by aspect arboriculture

and CAMCD2 of the NP which require development to protect green on-site infrastructure and retain existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows where possible.

Affordable housing

9. Policy CP9 of the SDLP sets out that the Council will negotiate the tenure, size and type of affordable units on a site by site basis having regard to housing needs, site specifics and other factors. The supporting text indicates that, other than in exceptional circumstances, affordable housing should be provided on site and should be well integrated with the wider site and indistinguishable by either design or location from the market housing. There is no dispute between the parties that the proposal, which is to be considered as part of the wider site, would trigger a requirement for affordable housing. The Council indicate that their preference would be for on site provision in the form of a 3 bedroom, tenure-blind affordable unit located away from the existing cluster of affordable dwellings to the rear of the site.
10. The appellant indicates that an individual affordable housing unit would be unlikely to be taken on by a registered provider. Set against this, the Council are of the view that, in light of ongoing negotiations with registered providers in relation to the transfer of affordable housing units on the wider site, it is likely that an on site affordable unit could be secured in relation to the appeal proposal. However, at the present time, there is no certainty in that regard. In addition, given the size and siting of the appeal site, any on site provision would be in close proximity to the affordable housing units immediately to the rear of the site and would therefore result in the clustering of affordable units in a group comprising over 8 units, a scenario which the Council is keen to avoid. For these reasons, a financial contribution towards affordable housing in lieu of on site provision would be appropriate in this instance.
11. The signed unilateral undertaking (UU) pursuant to Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 submitted as part of the appeal includes a contribution of £185,625, towards off site affordable housing provision. The appellant indicates this figure is based on the open market value of a notional 2 bedroom unit, for which the need is greatest, as set out in the Gloucestershire Local Housing Needs Assessment 2019 (LHNA). Nevertheless, having regard to the size of units required to meet the need set out in the LHNA, together with the provision of affordable units on the wider site, which comprises 18 X 2 bedroom units (45%), and 8 X 3 bedroom units (20%), this would indicate a need for an additional 3 bedroom unit, as suggested by the Council, as opposed to a 2 bedroom unit. Accordingly, the financial contribution towards affordable housing should therefore be calculated based on the need for a 3 bedroom unit.
12. Consequently, the proposal would fail to make adequate provision for affordable housing and would conflict with the aims of Policy CP9 of the SDLP. The Council's refusal reason also refers to Policy CP3 of the SDLP, which sets out the settlement hierarchy for the location of new development, however, it is unclear as to how it is of relevance to this issue.

Need for car park

13. The appeal submissions indicate that Cam and Dursley Railway Station, which provides connections to Gloucester and beyond, and is the only station in the area to offer a direct service to Bristol, is well used by the residents of Cam and Dursley,

as well as those in the wider surrounding area, who are likely to travel there by private car. The Council contend that, as the car park which is the subject of the appeal has not yet been provided for use by members of the public, it cannot be determined that it is not needed.

14. The Transport Assessment and subsequent additional information submitted as part of the planning application, indicates that the existing car park at the station has capacity to meet demand, at different times of the day, including at weekends, and found no parking on Box Road. Thus, it is asserted by the appellant that, given the spare capacity available, at a time where rail use is rising, the proposed overspill parking at the appeal site is not required to meet an identified level of demand. I note the Council's suggestion that, as the surveys were undertaken during peak times, the results would exclude those times of the day when members of the public seeking to park may arrive too late to find a parking space. However, given its popularity with commuters, as indicated by the Council, who are likely to utilise the car park from first thing in the morning until the end of the working day, there is no clear reason why the timeframe in which the surveys were undertaken would not represent a true reflection of the likely use of the car park, including peaks in demand.
15. At the time of my site visit, which was mid-morning during the week, which I appreciate is only a snapshot in time, there were several parking spaces available in the station carpark. While I acknowledge my findings differ from those of the elected members during their visit at a similar time of day, this too was only a snapshot in time. Moreover, while I am mindful of concern expressed by local residents regarding antisocial parking on the surrounding roads, there were no vehicles parked on Box Road in the vicinity of the station at the time of my site visit. Furthermore, while I note photographs of parked vehicles on the public highway, I have not been presented with any substantive evidence that parking congestion on the surrounding roads is a frequent occurrence to the detriment of highway safety.
16. Accordingly, in the absence of any substantive evidence that there is a shortfall in the existing parking provision at the station to meet demand, it has not been demonstrated that passengers would be deterred from accessing the rail network by virtue of a lack of parking, or that the appeal proposal would result in ad hoc parking on the road network nearby. Despite evidence that the number of users of the station is steadily rising, there is no clear evidence that the existing station car park, together with the alternative overflow car park comprising 20 spaces, positioned closer to the station, would not be sufficient to accommodate the additional vehicles generated by additional users of the station.
17. Furthermore, there is no clear evidence that measures which may be introduced to reduce vehicular traffic in Bristol city centre, including clean air zones and increases in parking charges, would have a tangible effect upon the number of vehicles parking at the station. While the population has increased locally in recent years, due to the provision of new residential developments in the area, given the proximity of the dwellings to the station, it is likely that residents who wish to access the rail network would travel to the station by means other than the private motor car.
18. I acknowledge that interested parties wish to see the provision of the car park, and the Parish Council's willingness to adopt and manage the facility. Nonetheless, while the appeal proposal would conflict with the Council's vision set out in the Cam

Parish Council's Strategic Development Plan, September 2024, to add additional capacity for car parking, this relates primarily to the review of the employment land allocation opposite the station and consideration of the development of a transport hub.

19. My attention is drawn to the Local Plan Review: Infrastructure Delivery Plan, dated June 2021 which highlights ambitions to improve rail access and service frequency through the Greater Bristol Metro West project which, during Phase 2, could see the provision of a half-hourly service being introduced that would link to Gloucester via Cam and Dursley. In that regard it sets out that, given the proximity of the emerging strategic allocation proposals at Cam to the station, there is potential to create an attractive sustainable transport hub at the strategic sites, contributions to which may be sought as part of the allocations.
20. Even if the provision of the overflow car parking facility was considered to be a benefit when planning permission was granted by the Council for the wider development, for the reasons set out, there is no substantive evidence that it is required to satisfy an existing unmet demand for parking for those travelling to the station. It is suggested by interested parties that the car park would help to alleviate pressure for resident parking in the surrounding streets. However, there is no compelling evidence that the wider residential development was not designed to incorporate an appropriate amount of parking, in accordance with the relevant parking standards at the time, or that it was reliant on the car park to meet those needs.
21. In light of the above considerations, it has not been demonstrated that the failure to provide the car park would give rise to a lack of availability of parking provision for users of the station, so that to discourage the use of the station by those who access it by car, or result in on street parking that would have a harmful effect on the safety of users of the highway network. I therefore conclude that the car park is not necessary in the interests of sustainable travel or highway safety. In that regard the appeal proposal would not conflict with the aims of Policies EI12 and EI14 of the SDLP which seek to promote transport choice and accessibility and protect land or facilities necessary for the efficient operation of existing stations or the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework which promote sustainable development.

Highway safety

22. The Council is satisfied that information submitted as part of the appeal to show the provision of pedestrian visibility splays and that the entrance to the site can accommodate vehicles entering/exiting the site at the same time, the access to the site from Signal Road is safe and suitable and the proposed layout is therefore acceptable in that regard. Based on the evidence before me, I have no reason to reach a different conclusion.
23. While I note the Council's contention that the proposed car parking layout would necessitate an awkward manoeuvre in a limited and contrived space, particularly in relation to the allocated external parking space for plot 4, the appellant's swept path analysis nevertheless shows that the parking spaces are accessible and therefore useable. Moreover, based on the evidence before me, the internal layout of the site would not be so contrived or impractical that the manoeuvres required to access and egress the parking spaces would dissuade future occupiers from using them.

Furthermore, should vehicles park in such a way to obstruct access to garages, this is a matter to be resolved between the owners of the properties.

24. There is no dispute that the proposal would result in a shortfall of one parking space, when assessed against the parking standards set out in Appendix 2 of the SDLP. The Council also highlight a lack of visitor parking; however, I have not been directed to any specific policy requirement in that regard. Given the modest deviation from the standards, and that future occupiers would benefit from accessibility to services and amenities in Cam by means other than the private car, along with the station, the absence of a single space would be unlikely to have a significant effect on highway safety as a result of lack of parking provision.
25. Thus, in light of the foregoing considerations, I conclude that the layout of the proposed development would not be harmful to highway safety. In that regard the proposal would not conflict with Policies CP7, CP8, CP13 and ES3 of the SDLP which require new housing development to contribute to the provision of sustainable and inclusive communities, and to be well designed, including, among other things, a layout, access and parking that are appropriate to the site and its surroundings and not have a detrimental impact on highway safety, or Policy EI12 of the SDLP which requires vehicular parking to be provided in accordance with adopted standards, unless an alternative parking provision is justified.

Other Matters

26. The provision of 5 dwellings, of a mix of sizes, would contribute towards the supply of housing in the area. The appeal proposal would also accord with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework which encourage the effective use of land, including brownfield sites. However, given the scale of the development any benefits in these regards would be limited.
27. While the scheme may include opportunities for biodiversity through the provision of garden areas and landscaping, in lieu of the hardstanding area of the car park, I have not been provided with any substantive evidence in that regard. Moreover, there is no compelling evidence that the arrangements for the management of surface water run-off from the site would be enhanced as a consequence of the proposal. As such, the weight to be attached to these matters is limited.
28. The proposal may also be compliant with various other provisions of the development plan, including high quality design and energy efficient construction, however, the absence of harm or conflict with other relevant development plan policies is of neutral weight.
29. The site is in the core catchment zone of the Cotswold Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation and within the buffer zone of the Severn Estuary Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Ramsar site (the European sites). So as to avoid an adverse effect upon the integrity of the European sites, the appellant proposes that financial contributions would be made towards mitigation measures, to be secured via the UU. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) require the decision maker to undertake an Appropriate Assessment where there are likely significant effects from the proposal, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. However, regulation 63(1) indicates this is only necessary where the competent authority is minded to grant consent for the proposal. As such, in view of my overall conclusions resulting in my

decision to dismiss the appeal, it has not been necessary to address this in any further detail.

Conclusion

30. The harm identified in respect of the first and second main issues means that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole. There are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding to justify granting planning permission contrary to the development plan.
31. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

E Worley

INSPECTOR