



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 December 2025

by **SE Hughes BA (Hons) PGDip MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R0335/W/25/3371869

20 Cricket Field Grove, Crowthorne, Berkshire RG45 7ES

- 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 Ms Sarah Rammala against the decision of Bracknell Forest Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00819/FUL.
 - The development proposed is “retrospective change of use from residential to short term rental/ Airbnb usage (for individual room rentage) - to be used for the full annum”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Reference to “retrospective” in the description of the application is not a form of development and the appellant has confirmed that since a Planning Contravention Notice (PCN) was served on 6 August 2024 all ‘Airbnb’ rentals at the property have ceased. Therefore, I have considered the appeal on the same basis as the Council, that the development proposal seeks a change of use to allow rooms to be individually rented on a short-term Airbnb basis throughout the year.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed change of use on the existing housing stock in the borough.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a 4 bedroom semi-detached dwelling. The appeal proposal comprises a change of use from a permanent residential dwelling to an Airbnb.
5. Dealing with development proposals which would lead to a loss of residential accommodation within Class C3 dwelling house use, such as the appeal proposal, Policy LP 37 of the Bracknell Forest Local Plan 2020-2037 (BFLP) states that development which would lead to the net loss of residential accommodation within ‘Class C3 dwelling house’ will be granted provided it meets one of the following exceptions: (i) the continuation of residential use is undesirable because of environmental conditions; (ii) the development forms part of a wider comprehensive scheme which would result in an overall net increase in residential units; (iii) the proposal delivers overriding public benefits which outweigh the loss of the residential use; (iv) a change from residential use is the only viable way of ensuring the protection of a heritage asset; and (v) it has been demonstrated that residential use has been abandoned.

6. There is no dispute between the parties that Policy LP 37 exceptions (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) do not apply. However, the appellant contends that exception (v) applies because the residential use has been abandoned, as the property was used as an Airbnb for 5 years prior to the PCN. However, there is limited evidence to corroborate 5 years of Airbnb rentals. More importantly, I have no Lawful Development Certificate to confirm that the property is immune from enforcement action, having been in an Airbnb use for 10 years. Therefore, I am not persuaded that the residential use has been abandoned. Particularly as the residential use could be easily resumed without making any internal or external alterations to the property. As such I find that the proposed change of use fails to accord with exception (v) of Policy LP 37.
7. I accept that the loss of one residential unit to Airbnb use would represent a very minor reduction in the borough's existing housing stock. However, the supporting text to the policy makes it clear that in order to ensure a sufficient supply and choice of housing, it is important that not only are additional new homes provided, that the existing housing stock in the borough is also protected, to ensure there is an overall net gain of new homes to meet future needs.
8. In view of the above, I find that the development which would result in the loss of a permanent dwelling would have a harmful effect on the existing housing stock in the borough, contrary to policy LP 37 of the BFLP.

Other Matters

9. I have been referred to several other appeal decisions for Airbnb use in other Local Authority areas. However, I do not have full details of these appeals so I cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to this appeal proposal, including in respect of their use and development plan policy. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.

Planning Balance

10. In terms of housing supply the Council has confirmed that it is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and that it has a shortfall amounting to 4.49 years. Both parties accept that paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is engaged and I have no evidence to show otherwise.
11. Paragraph 11 states that planning permission should be granted unless (i) policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the development, or (ii) any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, and having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination. There is nothing to suggest 11(d) (i) is relevant to this case, hence the balance in 11(d) (ii) applies.
12. As a 4 bedroom dwelling the appeal property contributes to the supply of housing suitable for families in the borough. The proposal would take this dwelling out of circulation from the housing stock, as such I have found above that it would conflict with Policy LP 37 of the BFLP.

13. Paragraph 61 of the Framework sets out the Government's objective to significantly boost the supply of homes with the aim of meeting identified housing need, including providing an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. Therefore, I afford considerable weight to the proposal's conflict with Policy LP 37.
14. Socially the dwelling makes a minor but important contribution to the area's housing supply, which I attribute moderate weight. Whilst it is suggested that it would address a need for short-term accommodation from non-leisure guests, there is nothing in the evidence before me to demonstrate an overriding local requirement of such accommodation, therefore I have given this minimal weight.
15. Environmentally, since I have found above that the property has not been abandoned, the maintained residential use, ensures that the property continues to be an effective use of land. As such, this matter is a neutral consideration in the planning balance, as is the proposal's continued domestic appearance.
16. The appellant argues that the Airbnb would provide flexible accommodation for business travellers and such like who would support a prosperous local economy, rather than high-turnover leisure guests and tourists who might cause disruption to neighbours. However, such economic benefits would be marginal in comparison to those associated with the use of the property as a permanent residential dwelling. Furthermore, I do not accept the generalisation that business guests would be intrinsically less disruptive than leisure guests, that would simply depend on the circumstances of each individual and their own behaviours. Therefore, I have attributed this limited weight in the planning balance.
17. Consequently, the adverse impacts on the housing strategy would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

18. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

SE Hughes

INSPECTOR