



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2025

by H Jones BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/F0935/W/25/3373421

Hazel Gill Farm, Welton, Carlisle CA5 7HJ

- 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 Chamberlain against the decision of Cumberland Council.
- The application Ref is FUL/2025/0072.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing barn and construction of new dwelling.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address in my banner heading above is taken from the appeal form which I consider accurately and succinctly describes the site's location.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the development complies with relevant policy within the development plan which controls housing in the countryside.

Reasons

4. Policy S3 of the Allerdale Local Plan (Part 1) 2014 (the LP Part 1) establishes a spatial strategy, outlining the approach to the scale, location and distribution of growth. In doing so, Policy S3 sets out a settlement hierarchy, that new development shall be concentrated within towns and villages, and that the scale of development will be expected to be commensurate to settlement size and be reflective of the settlement hierarchy.
5. Policy S3's supporting text assists with its interpretation, and it explains the planning merits of its spatial strategy. This includes that the spatial strategy will ensure that most development takes place close to services, employment opportunities and public transport options, and reduces the need for travel. Consequently, Policy S3 restricts housing in the countryside to particular types of developments. This includes, amongst them, the conversion or reuse of a suitable existing building.
6. The Council cannot demonstrate a deliverable 5 year supply of housing land, and, instead, it has 4.6 years' worth of supply. As a result, paragraph 11 d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is engaged, and Policy S3 is deemed to be out of date. Nevertheless, amongst other matters, the Framework¹ sets out that isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided, unless certain

¹ National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 84, 109 and 110

exceptional circumstances apply, and that patterns of growth should be managed and the environmental impacts of development-related traffic taken into account. Therefore, despite the housing land supply position and Policy S3's age, the substance of how Policy S3 operates in relation to the proposal remains consistent with the Framework.

7. As it would entail the demolition of a barn and construction of a new dwelling in its place, the reuse of an existing building would not result from the proposal. Neither does the development constitute any of the other types of housing development Policy S3 sets out as being acceptable in the countryside. Therefore, the proposal conflicts with Policy S3, and the proposal constitutes a pattern of development and growth in a countryside location that would be contrary to the planned distribution of development advocated by the development plan. This would be harmful.
8. Policy S31 of the LP Part 1 applies to proposals which seek the reuse of rural buildings and the replacement of dwellings in the countryside. Since neither are proposed here, Policy S31 is not relevant or applicable in this case, and the proposal does not conflict with it.
9. Nevertheless, given the conflict with Policy S3, the development fails to comply with relevant policy within the development plan which controls housing in the countryside.

Other Matters

10. A planning permission² permits a house at the site through the reuse and extension of the barn proposed for demolition in the appeal proposal. The permission is extant, and I consider there to be a real prospect that the development the subject of that planning permission could be implemented as an alternative to that the subject of this appeal.
11. Like the appeal proposal, the house deliverable under the existing planning permission would have 3 bedrooms. It would be similarly scaled, positioned, and laid out, and it would have a similar external appearance. Consequently, in certain respects, the implementation of the existing permission would result in comparable effects to the appeal proposal. This would include its visual effects, and its transport-related impacts.
12. No detailed demonstration of the proposal's energy efficiency performance is before me, nor of the permitted barn conversion development in comparison. Whilst I note the proposed timber frame build, and the intention to reuse some materials, the barn's conversion would by its nature limit the use of new materials. Consequently, I have no firm grounds on which to conclude that the proposal would be more energy efficient or environmentally friendly than the permitted development. I also have no substantive evidence before me which demonstrates that the permitted barn conversion would be a more costly and time-consuming development.
13. Unlike the appeal proposal, the existing planning permission would make an efficient use of an existing, traditional, rural building. Because of the benefit of this, the permitted barn conversion constitutes one of the select types of housing

² Planning permission referenced FUL/2024/0098

development permissible in the countryside through LP Part 1 Policies S3 and S31 and, indeed, by the Framework³.

14. In contrast, as the proposal would demolish the existing traditional building and replace it, it would fail to deliver the benefit of bringing it back into use, and it would constitute a new-build dwelling in an isolated countryside location. Consequently, I conclude that the appeal proposal would be a more harmful development than the permitted barn conversion. Therefore, as the less harmful development, the permitted barn conversion is not a fallback position which weighs in favour of allowing the appeal.
15. An appeal decision is referenced by the appellant⁴. The full details of that case are not before me, however, I note that the Inspector in that case found that the appeal scheme would deliver significant benefits in comparison to the fallback position. For the reasons I have set out that does not apply here. I also have limited information in respect of the cited Whitehaven case⁵, such that I cannot conduct an accurate comparison between it and the proposal for my determination. Consequently, these cited cases do not weigh in favour of the proposal.
16. The development would provide another planning permission for a house, and the new-build proposed would increase the choice of homes in the area. However, with only a single house proposed, the contribution which it would make to supply would be very modest. Furthermore, there is already an implementable permission for a house at the site. In the circumstances, the proposal's contribution to housing supply is a limited benefit.
17. The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain applies to the proposal. The required discharge of the biodiversity gain condition following the grant of planning permission to ensure the objective of at least a 10% biodiversity net gain would be a further modest benefit.

Planning Balance

18. I have identified conflict with Policy S3 of the LP Part 1 and, overall, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. This is a matter of significant weight.
19. Paragraph 11 d) is engaged but, in this case, none of the policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance apply or are relevant. I must therefore consider whether the adverse impacts of permitting the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the Framework's policies as a whole.
20. The proposal's contribution to housing supply and choice, and the achievement of a biodiversity net gain would be modest benefits of the proposal, in accordance with the Framework's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and achieving biodiversity enhancements.
21. The development's adverse impacts and conflict with the Framework's policies would stem from the pattern of growth it represents: the introduction of an isolated

³ National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 84

⁴ Appeal Decision referenced 3248009

⁵ Decision referenced 4/22/2216/0F1

house in the countryside without adequate justification and, associated with this, its travel-related environmental impacts.

22. My objections to the development on these grounds are substantial and, as a result, the adverse impacts of granting planning permission in this case would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The proposal does not therefore benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

23. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
24. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

H Jones

INSPECTOR