
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2026 by E Street BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 March 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/J0405/W/25/3374793

Hillview Cottages, Land South of, Brill Road, Ludgershall, Buckinghamshire HP18 9PG

- 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 Lewis and Stephen Croucher against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council - North Area (Aylesbury).
 - The application Ref is 25/01893/APP
 - The development proposed is described as “erection of two self build detached two bed single storey stable style dwellings”.
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This decision is issued in accordance with section 56 (2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended and supersedes that issued on 9 February 2026.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure and Preliminary Matter

2. The site visit was undertaken by a representative of the Inspector whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal. In addition, the description of development on the application form varies from the decision notice. However, the application form sufficiently describes proposed development and is therefore reflected above.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are a) whether the principle of the proposed development would be acceptable with particular regard to its location and the spatial strategy; and b) its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Principle of Development

4. Policy S2 of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2021 (VALP) sets out the spatial strategy for growth within the district. It identifies the primary focus of strategic growth and investment will be at Aylesbury and will be supported by other larger, medium and smaller villages. Ludgershall is categorised as a smaller village. Typically, these are more isolated and there is a higher reliance on the private car due to there being limited services within walking distance. The policy goes on to detail that with smaller villages there will be more limited housing growth coming forward. Moreover, it advises that development that does not fit with the scale,

distribution or requirements of this policy will not be permitted unless brought forward through neighbourhood planning.

5. Ludgershall has no neighbourhood plan and is therefore directed to Policy D4 of the VALP. New development will be required to contribute to the sustainability of that village along with a set of criteria detailed. Policy D4 requires development to be located within the existing developed footprint of the village or where it is substantially enclosed by existing built development. Further explanatory text states that the existing developed footprint is defined as the continuous built form of the village and excludes individual buildings and groups of dispersed buildings.
6. The proposed development is to be sited in an otherwise open field adjacent a set of four dwellings. Ludgershall has no defined settlement boundary. Residential development is clustered along two parallel roads, with the High Street and Church Lane linking these routes. Brill Road leaves the village and leads to the next village of Brill. It appears that the Church is the boundary edge of the village with the road becoming windier and narrower with limited footpaths. Despite the presence of the semi-detached dwellings adjacent the appeal site, the appeal scheme would be seen as dispersed buildings detached from and outside of the village. Notwithstanding the proposal being closed on one side by existing development, the siting of the proposed scheme would be seen as being built on the edge of the settlement rather than within the existing footprint. The change in speed limit adjacent the appeal site does not define the settlement boundary.
7. As such, the site is not suitably located for new housing having regard to the Council's spatial strategy. Resultantly, it would lead to conflict with Policies S2 and D4 of the VALP and the National Planning Policy Framework, which amongst other things seeks to ensure that new development is located in the right places to reduce the need to travel and have ready, sustainable access to services.

Character & Appearance

8. The appeal site is a vacant parcel of land. The dwellings would be adjacent a set of four semi-detached two storey dwellings. The wider area is within the Marsh Gibbon Vale Landscape Character Area which is defined as being relatively low lying with long wide views to the open fields with strong hedgerows. The adjacent Conservation Area is defined as having a low-density level of development, with importance placed on the areas of agricultural land forming the spacious gaps with a village green defining the centre. These features in combination garner a sense of defining rurality which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
9. Despite the loss of land being small, given the context of the wider ownership and open field, the presence of such development would cause a harmful and incongruous break in the otherwise uninterrupted landscape at the edge of the settlement. Moreover, it would urbanise a small portion of the field and appear awkward and visually detract from the open feel of the wider fields. The design of the buildings attempts to give the appearance of a stable building which are common within the countryside, however they would be clearly residential, emphasised by the introduction of driveways and gardens. It would result in two very different forms of development which would not sit comfortably or congruously with the wider character. Effectively hiding the scheme with high hedges and landscape buffers would not make it acceptable.

10. The appellant has advised that they would seek to implement sustainable energy measures post permission and they could be conditioned as part of an energy statement. This could be positive but worthy of only limited weight given the scale of the scheme. Policy C3 of the VALP appears to be more strategic in nature and for much larger housing schemes and some elements would relate to other provisions such as Building Regulations. I am not sufficiently convinced that such stringent measures are required for this number of dwellings.
11. With the above in mind, the proposal would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area, as such, there would be conflict with Policies S2 and D4 of the VALP and the Framework. Together, amongst other things, these seek to ensure that development proposals are of a high-quality design and standard.

Other Matters

12. The appeal site is in close proximity to the Ludgershall Conservation Area, a Grade II listed building, a Grade I listed Church and an ancient monument. The Council is satisfied that there would be no harm to the setting of the Conservation Area and buildings by virtue of the modest and low-lying scale of the proposals and the separation distance and intervening residential buildings. With this, and Section 66(1) and Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 in mind, I have no reason to disagree with their conclusions.

Planning Balance, Conclusion and Recommendation

13. The main parties are in agreement that the Council is unable to demonstrate the supply of housing sites as required by the Framework and thus the most important policies are out of date. I would therefore be taken to the relevant circumstances of paragraph 11. This explains that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole, 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.
14. The appeal scheme would give rise to the harms I have described above. They would be significant and enduring and conflict with the relevant aims of the Framework as I have set them out. I therefore ascribe them substantial weight. The proposal would provide housing but as it would only be two units, the difference it would make to any shortfall would be very limited. There would be some economic effects during the construction phase and those of a social nature once the dwelling is occupied. These would again however be limited by the provision of two units and time limited in their effect. The proposal would seek to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity. Whilst this is an environmental benefit, it would be modest given the scale of the proposals, site and the level of uplift in context. Moreover, if the scheme was a self-build project, it would either be exempt from or have to provide net gain as part of the statutory duty.
15. The Council is failing to grant sufficient permissions for self-build dwellings. Be this as it may, there is no sufficiently robust mechanism before me to ensure this project would be so. This matter would therefore be due only very limited weight. The scheme would not be situated in a sustainable location in terms of a residential

development. Moreover, it would not make effective use of the land and would not result in a contribution to a well-designed place nor provide affordable housing.

16. With this and the above in mind, it is sufficiently clear that the adverse impacts of the scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in the circumstances I have set out. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not therefore apply to the appeal scheme. I have thus been given no other compelling reason, taking into account other material considerations advanced and the approach of the Framework, to make a finding other than in accordance with the development plan with which the scheme would conflict for the above reasons. I therefore recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

E Street

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and my representative's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR