



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 February 2026

by **P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 MARCH 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/25/3376665

Reeds Hatch Farm, Boundary Road, Dockenfield, Farnham GU10 4ET

- 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 and Ms Boffin and Larmer against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2025/01125.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a dwelling and detached garage/home office with new vehicular access with associated works following demolition of existing barn and garage with removal of existing manege and partial demolition of existing stable block.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council has amended the description of development from that seen on the application form. This has been agreed by the main parties. Accordingly, I have adopted the revised description of the development from the decision notice.
3. The appellant has provided an amended plan with the appeal which shows that both maneges would be removed and grassed. Procedural guidance¹ sets out that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme and there are no provisions within the Rules for amendments to be submitted. It is important that what is considered by the Inspector at appeal is essentially the same scheme that was considered by the local planning authority and by interested parties at the application stage.
4. The site location plan shows that while the second manege now proposed for removal is within the appellant's ownership, it sits outside of the red line. Therefore, the changes are substantive, and I am not satisfied that my consideration of the proposed amendments would cause no injustice to any party. Therefore, I have assessed the appeal scheme on the same plans as the Council made their decision.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, having regard to the Countryside beyond the Green Belt and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV); and

¹ Planning appeals: procedural guide – England 2025

- Biodiversity Net Gain.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site is located within the Countryside beyond the Green Belt and within the AGLV, which is designated for its landscape value as well as a buffer to a National Landscape. The South Downs National Park (NP) is located close to the site.
7. The local area is generally attractive and pastoral, characterised by open fields interspersed with areas of woodland and trees/hedgerows on field boundaries and alongside the nearby narrow lanes. The local topography is undulating. Whilst other dwellings are scattered in the surrounding area, they are normally sited alongside the lanes.
8. The appeal site forms part of the wider Reeds Hatch Farm. Development within the wider Reeds Hatch Farm, including Reed House, is grouped near the existing access point, with the stable block and maneges sited to the east. The site, as a largely undeveloped parcel of land, makes a positive contribution to the rural open character and surrounding verdant and visually attractive environment, reinforcing the landscape quality of the area.
9. The proposed development seeks to construct a detached dwelling with a detached garage/home office, which would be accessed via a long driveway off Boundary Road. Even though some existing outbuildings would be demolished and one manege would be removed, the scheme would urbanise the appeal site and result in a substantial incursion of residential development into the open countryside. Moreover, due to its location at a considerable distance from Reed House, the proposed residential plot would be visually divorced from this property, markedly at odds with its surrounding context.
10. The appellant's Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVA) assessed the likely landscape and visual effects which would result from the proposal. The main focus of the LVA related to the visual effects from key receptors in the surrounding area, and the report found that the change to the local landscape that would be brought about by the proposed development would be negligible, concluding that there would be no significant visual effects. The Landscape and Visual Appeal Statement (the Appeal LVA) provided views from additional viewpoints along Boundary Road. Whilst the roadside hedge along Boundary Road is thinner at points and there would be some views through it in the winter, any such views towards the development would be distant and fleeting.
11. However, while there would be no significant public views towards the proposal, it would nonetheless be an incongruous form of development in an otherwise open part of the rural landscape that would harm the character of the area due to its extensive encroachment into the countryside. Further, while a condition could control external lighting, the proposal would still introduce some artificial lighting in a place which is intrinsically characterised by low light levels.
12. The Appeal LVA explained that the National Park boundary runs along the edge of the dense woodland of Alice Holt Forest, and once within the woodland there are no significant views out to the east. Additionally, there are no footpaths within that

perimeter area. Given such, there is no meaningful inter-visibility between the appeal site and the South Downs NP. The proposal would not, therefore, harm the foreground of the South Downs NP.

13. Having regard to the above, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, including Countryside beyond the Green Belt and AGLV. As a result, it would conflict with Policies RE1 and RE3 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites 2018 (LPP1) and Policies DM1, DM4 and DM15 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2023 (LPP2). These policies, amongst other provisions, require development to recognise the natural beauty and undeveloped character which is intrinsic to the open countryside, respect, respond and integrate with the distinctive character of the landscape and not cause harm to the visual character of the locality.

Biodiversity Net Gain

14. Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, all developments are now required to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain (the 'biodiversity objective'), unless one of the various exemptions applies. The appellant indicated on the planning application form that the proposal would be exempt from the biodiversity objective, due to the development being self-build. However, there was no mechanism submitted to secure the development as a self-build dwelling.
15. The appellant provided a duly executed UU under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as a part of their appeal submission. This UU seeks to secure the dwellings as self-build and custom build housing.
16. I have considered the obligation in light of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) and the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (the CIL Regulations), and I am satisfied that the obligation is directly related to the development and fairly and reasonably related to it in scale and kind. Furthermore, given the biodiversity objective exemptions, it is necessary to make the development acceptable in planning terms. Accordingly, the proposal would be exempt from the statutory BNG condition.

Other Considerations

17. I have been referred to the previous planning permissions² for new dwellings and detached garage within the wider Reeds Hatch Farm. The evidence indicates that, were I to allow this appeal, it would be possible to implement extant permissions for residential development at Reeds Hatch Farm in conjunction with this proposal. This would exacerbate the harm to the countryside and AGLV due to the proliferation of residential dwellings within Reeds Hatch Farm and associated paraphernalia within the rural landscape.
18. The appellant suggests a condition could be used to prevent implementation of previous planning permissions. However, any such condition would not be relevant to the development to be permitted if it affected the extant permissions, nor reasonable in all other respects if it prevented either the appeal proposal or the

² LPA Ref: WA/2023/01690; LPA Ref: WA/2020/0167LPA; Ref WA/2021/02098

extant permissions from being implemented. It therefore would fail to meet the tests set out in the Framework.

19. The appellant has provided a UU under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. However, I am not persuaded that the wording of this planning obligation is sufficiently precise to ensure that the approved developments would not be implemented. In any event, since I found that the proposal would be harmful to the character of the area on its own right, this is not determinative in the context of the appeal before me.
20. Regardless, I have no reason to think the appellant would not implement the consented schemes should this appeal fail. As such, even if there was a suitable mechanism before me to ensure that the schemes could not be implemented simultaneously, even though there are some similarities between the permitted developments and the appeal scheme, and one permission pertained to a larger dwelling, the fundamental difference between them relates to the siting of the appeal proposal. The developments granted planning permission would be located closer to Reed House, while the proposal would be further removed from the existing built development within Reeds Hatch Farm.
21. Therefore, while the Appeal LVA found that the proposed dwelling would be in a generally less visible location than the permitted development, the appeal scheme would lead to a more significant sprawl of built form into the countryside. As such, I find that the fallback position would be less harmful than the appeal scheme. Accordingly, I afford it limited weight.

Planning Balance

22. The Council acknowledges that there is not a demonstrable five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. In such circumstances, paragraph 11 d) ii of the Framework states that permission should be granted unless 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.
23. The proposal would deliver a new dwelling to contribute to the housing stock within the Borough. Future residents would be active in the local community, and some economic benefits would be delivered during construction phase and following occupation. However, given that the proposal would deliver one new dwelling, taken together these benefits attract limited weight in favour of the appeal scheme.
24. The proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area for the reasons outlined above. The Framework sets out that planning decisions should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. Therefore, the conflict between LPP1 Policies RE1 and RE3 and LPP2 Policies DM1, DM4 and DM15 should be given significant weight in this appeal.
25. Thus, the adverse impacts of the proposal 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

26. 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. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR