



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 January 2026

by **Lewis Condé BSc, MSc, MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 April 2026.

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/25/3375169

Land Adjacent to Harrow Drive, Headley Easting 452011 Northing 162245

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Linda Dunn against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/01512/PIP.
 - The development proposed is permission in principle for a single residential dwelling and associated access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The site address and description of development in the banner heading above are taken directly from the original planning application form.
3. The appeal seeks permission in principle. The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this consent route has two stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable for development in principle. The second stage (technical details consent) is when the detailed development proposals are assessed.
4. The PPG further advises that the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development to be permitted. An applicant can apply for permission by expressing a minimum and maximum net number of dwellings as part of the application. In this instance, permission in principle has been sought for one dwelling on the appeal site.
5. Plans and drawings showing how a dwelling could be developed at the site were submitted alongside the original application. However, as the proposal is for permission in principle, I have treated these as indicative only.

Main Issue

6. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, having regard to its location, land use and the amount of development.

Reasons

7. The appeals site forms part of a field that lies adjacent to established residential development on Harrow Drive. Whilst the field is not part of a designated landscape and contains existing features such as an access track, a fishing lodge, and mature vegetated boundaries, it nonetheless forms an edge to the main

built-up area of Headley and acts as a gentle transition to the wider rural landscape beyond.

8. The wider surrounding environs contain some more dispersed properties within a countryside setting, including individual dwellings set within large plots. However, the appeal site's position, and its visual and spatial relationship with nearby development, mean that the proposal would be experienced principally in the context of the neighbouring Harrow Drive properties.
9. The dwellings along Harrow Drive are arranged in tightly grouped, coherent clusters—either in cul-de-sacs or linear rows. Despite some variety in their types and sizes, the consistent layout and the similarity of their appearance give them a clear, cohesive identity. Collectively, they read as an integrated group rather than dispersed individual properties.
10. In this context, the proposed siting of a single dwelling on the appeal site, beyond any established building line and highly divorced from the properties along Harrow Drive, would appear as an unsympathetic and poorly related addition, that would fail to reflect the established pattern of residential development.
11. The existing fishing lodge would be removed to accommodate the proposed development. Nevertheless, even if the proposed dwelling was single-storey and similar in scale, its function as a permanent residence would be fundamentally different. A dwelling would introduce a materially greater and more continuous level of activity, together with domestic paraphernalia and associated residential uses not currently characteristic of the site. As a result, the proposal would exert a more urbanising influence than the modest lodge it replaces. The resultant residential built form would be at odds with the site's prevailing semi-rural character and would not align with the established pattern or layout of neighbouring development.
12. The topography of the site, the field's existing boundary vegetation and the presence of existing built form, would result in views of the proposal being highly localised, as reflected within the appellant's landscape and visual impact assessment. Additionally, while key landscape features such as boundary vegetation could be retained, the dwelling would still be conspicuous from neighbouring properties, where its siting would appear discordant with the prevailing layout of development. In any event, limited visibility does not justify an unsympathetic form of development.
13. I am not satisfied that detailed design measures could sufficiently address the above concerns. Nor do I consider that additional landscaping would provide an effective or reliable means of mitigation, particularly given the uncertainties surrounding its long-term retention and success.
14. Bringing the above together, I find that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area having regard to its location, land use and the amount of development. It therefore conflicts with Policies EM1 and EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011 – 2029 (adopted 2016) (the Local Plan), as well as Policies L1 and HD3 of the Ashford Hill with Headley Neighbourhood Plan 2022-2029 (Made 2022) (the Neighbourhood Plan). Together these policies, amongst other matters, seek for development to be of a high-quality design that reflects its surroundings including existing patterns of development.

15. Although Policy HD1 of the Neighbourhood Plan was also cited in the Council's reason for refusal, I do not consider it to be relevant to this main issue.

Other Matters

16. The permission in principle at land north of Galley Lane¹ involved a greater number of dwellings than the current proposal, on an undeveloped site. Nonetheless, that site's relationship to existing residential built form is entirely different to the current appeal. Additionally, that scheme would potentially provide greater planning benefits through the delivery of four homes. As such it is materially different to the proposal before me.
17. I do not have the full background details of other permissions/applications for residential development in the surrounding area that have been highlighted by the appellant. However, from the available evidence it is apparent that there are material differences, for example, the specific site or development context, and/or planning histories.

Planning Balance & Conclusion

18. The proposal would contribute to housing supply in an authority area where there is currently a shortage and would utilise previously developed land. There would also be socio-economic benefits associated with the construction and subsequent occupation of the proposed dwelling. Given the scale and nature of the proposal, such benefits would though be modest.
19. Through the proposal's harm to the character and appearance of the area and its conflict with the aforementioned policies of the development plan, I find the appeal scheme to be contrary to the development plan as a whole. These policies are broadly consistent with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in respect of achieving well-designed places.
20. The Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply, with the evidence before me suggesting there is a substantial shortfall of less than 3 years. Paragraph 11d) of the Framework is therefore engaged.
21. The proposal would align with the aims of the Framework to significantly boost the supply of housing and its recognition that small-scale developments can make an important contribution to meeting housing requirements. It also would utilise previously developed land and provide socio-economic benefits associated with the delivery of a dwelling in an area with reasonable accessibility to services and facilities, including by sustainable travel modes. Some bio-diversity benefits would likely be forthcoming through the proposal needing to comply with the delivery of mandatory bio-diversity net gains² at the subsequent technical details stage.
22. Notwithstanding the Council's housing shortfall, and the fact that the appeal scheme would be of great importance to the potential occupiers, the proposal relates to a single dwelling and therefore the associated benefits would be modest.
23. Against the above, the proposal would conflict with the Framework in respect of promoting design that is sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding

¹ Application Reference: 24/02973/PIP

² Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

built environment and landscape setting. This is a matter to which I attach significant weight.

24. Together, I find the adverse impacts of the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. As such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.
25. In conclusion, the proposal conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Lewis Condé

INSPECTOR