



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 March 2026

by **C Butcher BSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 April 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/P0119/W/25/3374995

Land Adjacent to The Lodge, Gloucester Road BS35 3TU

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Barbara Matthews against the decision of South Gloucestershire Council.
 - The application Ref is P25/01901/PIP.
 - The development proposed is two new dwellinghouses (minimum 2, maximum 2 dwellings).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for two new dwellinghouses (minimum 2, maximum 2 dwellings). at Land Adjacent to The Lodge, Gloucester Road BS35 3TU in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref P25/01901/PIP.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has two stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent stage') is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. It is only at the technical details consent stage where a planning permission can be granted. This appeal relates to the first of these two stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted¹. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent technical details consent application if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.
4. I have amended the description of development slightly to refer to the minimum and maximum number of dwellings and also, in the interests of clarity, to remove reference to access and amenity space which fall outside of the scope of this permission in principle application.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposed development would be in a suitable location taking account of the Council's spatial strategy and access to services and facilities.

¹ PPG Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615

Reasons

6. The appeal site is a relatively small area of land which is situated on Gloucester Road, just outside of the settlement of Thornbury. It is located outside of the areas for growth as identified within Policy CS5 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Core Strategy, 2013 (the CS). Furthermore, the type of development proposed would not conform with any of the exceptions for residential development in the countryside, as set out within Policy PSP40 of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan: Policies, Sites and Places Plan, 2017 (the PSP).
7. On the basis of this policy conflict, it is clear that the proposal would not accord with the Council's spatial strategy, the overarching purpose of which is to direct new development towards sustainable locations.
8. The appeal site is located very close to a significant range of services and facilities within Thornbury. It is notable that Thornbury can be accessed from the appeal site by utilising well lit footpaths on both Gloucester Road and Grovesend Road. However, this would involve a reasonably lengthy walk which is unlikely to be an attractive option on a regular basis.
9. There are bus stops close to Chiltern Park and Bockenem Close which can also be reached on foot, but these again would involve a walk of a reasonable distance. From the evidence before me, it appears that a closer bus stop on Grovesend Road was subject to a trial service for a limited period only, and so this cannot be regarded as a determinative feature as part of this appeal. In essence, it is therefore highly likely that future occupiers of the two dwellings would be largely reliant on the private car to access services and facilities on a regular basis.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would conflict with CS Policies CS5 and CS34, as well as PSP Policies PSP11 and PSP40. In part, these policies seek to ensure that development is located in sustainable areas, including by maintaining existing settlement boundaries, and by encouraging the use of sustainable forms of transport.

Planning Balance

11. It is not in dispute between the main parties that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable sites for housing. Indeed, at 4.41 years the current shortfall is not insignificant, and I have no evidence before me to suggest that this position is likely to improve in the short-term. In such circumstances, Paragraph 11d and footnote 8 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) require 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 as a whole, including by having regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations.
12. In this instance, the benefits of the proposal include the provision of two new homes that would assist in meeting need in the area and provide support for local facilities. Despite the shortfall in housing land supply, I still only afford limited weight to these benefits given that they are relatively minor in nature.
13. I have concluded that there would be material harm in relation to the suitability of the site's location. The support for the principle of development within the

Framework is countered by the importance it places on the provision of development that encourages the use of sustainable modes of transport. I must therefore afford weight to this conflict. In this instance, while I have concluded that future occupiers would be largely reliant on private vehicles, the number of trips emanating from two dwellings would be very modest, and the majority of journeys are likely to be very short as a result of the proximity of the site to Thornbury. As such, the associated 'on the ground' harm would be limited.

14. As a result, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, the adverse impacts would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. The development therefore represents sustainable development in accordance with the Framework.

Other Matters

15. A Neighbourhood Plan for Thornbury was 'made' within the last five years. However, it does not allocate land for housing and so the requirements of paragraph 14 of the Framework, which concerns the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development, do not apply.
16. I note that a previous appeal for development in this location was dismissed in 2013². However, this decision was made some time ago and I do not have the full details of this decision before me. It is therefore unclear whether the same material considerations would have applied, including the lack of a five-year supply of sites.
17. The Council has also sought to rely on a more recent appeal decision wherein a proposal for residential development was dismissed, in part as a result of the location of the site³. I do find it somewhat surprising that the Council has relied on this particular decision given that it involved the provision of 75 dwellings. It is therefore in no way directly comparable to the much more modest appeal scheme before me, and it is clear that applying a different level of weight to sustainability concerns is entirely appropriate. As such, the appeal decision does not alter my conclusion in this case.

Conditions

18. As set out within the PPG, it is not possible for conditions to be attached to a grant of permission in principle.

Conclusion

19. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole. However, there are material considerations, notably the provisions of the Framework, that indicate that the decision should be taken other than in accordance with the development plan. The appeal is therefore allowed.

C Butcher

INSPECTOR

² Appeal ref: APP/P0119/A/13/2196760

³ Appeal ref: APP/P0119/W/25/3360622