



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 August 2017

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 14 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/A1720/W/17/3170974

Meon View Farm, Old Street, Hampshire, Fareham, PO14 3HQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Graham Moyse of The Estate of Patrick Michael Chappell Deceased, c/o Warner Goodman LLP against the decision of Fareham Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/16/0873/OA, dated 27 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as: Proposed redevelopment by the erection of four detached four-bedroomed chalet-style dwellings, following demolition of agricultural buildings and cessation of the existing commercial vehicle storage use.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Preliminary Matters

2. The application was submitted in outline with only access and layout to be determined at this stage. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on this basis.
3. A fourth reason for refusal relating to the provision of satisfactory mitigation against the effects of the development on the Solent Coastal Special Protection Area appears to have fallen away. An obligation has been provided to secure this and the Council has confirmed that this resolves their concerns. However, given that I am dismissing for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter in any detail.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the appeal site is a suitable location for housing and the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the countryside and the Meon gap.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is accessed between 57 and 57c Old Street. It is located to the rear of these and other residential properties along this side of Old Street in an area of countryside. The permitted use of the site is for the storage, sale and repair of commercial vehicles. At the time of my site visit the site had a derelict appearance. Many of the predominantly low level buildings and structures were in a state of disrepair or collapse, and were overgrown. The vehicles stored on site were also of some age and appeared to have not been moved in some time.

6. The appeal site is located outside of any settlement boundary. There is a general presumption against development outside of settlement boundaries as set out in Policy DSP6 of the Fareham Local Plan Part 2: Development Sites and Policies Plan (2015) (LP) and Policies CS6, CS11 and CS14 of the Fareham Core Strategy (2011) (CS). Policy CS6 states that only previously developed land within the defined settlement boundaries will be prioritised for development. Policy CS14 reiterates that built development outside the defined settlements will be strictly controlled to protect the countryside from development which would adversely affect its landscape character, appearance and function. It does, however, outline a number of exceptions to this which include the erection of replacement buildings where this would reduce the impact of development.
7. The Council have also identified the appeal site as falling within a Strategic Gap, namely the Meon gap. Policy CS22 of the CS explains that the gaps between settlements help define and maintain the separate identity of individual settlements. Consequently Policy CS22 sets out that land within such areas should be treated as countryside, as per the above policies, and that development which significantly affects the integrity of the gap and the physical and visual separation of settlements will not be permitted.
8. The proposal before me is for the demolition of the existing buildings on site and the erection of four detached chalet dwellings. The existing buildings on site are largely low level buildings and structures as previously noted. Due to their advanced state of disrepair and the disused appearance of the site they are beginning to blend into the landscape. The site therefore has a semi-rural character. I note the appellant's comment that the footprint of existing structures and the proposed development would be similar. However, given the existing conditions, four chalet style dwellings with associated car barns would undoubtedly increase the scale of built form on the site and along with the formal laying out of a courtyard and gardens would change the character of the site from semi-rural to that of a more urban and developed character.
9. Taking the above points together I therefore conclude that the proposal would increase the visual impact of development on this area of countryside contrary to Policy CS14 of the CS. It follows, therefore, that I do not consider that it would lead to an enhancement of this rural site. Furthermore, allowing residential development in this area would also undermine the integrity of the Meon gap, eroding its function of physically and visually separating settlements, contrary to Policy CS22.
10. I therefore conclude that the appeal site is not a suitable location for housing as it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the countryside and Meon gap. It would therefore conflict with the aims of Policies DSP6 of the LP and CS6, CS11, CS14 and CS22 of the CS, which I consider to be most relevant to the main issues in this appeal. I appreciate that the application has been submitted in outline with scale, landscaping and appearance reserved for later consideration but given the constraints of the site, I do not consider it is feasible to accommodate four chalet dwellings here without causing the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

11. I have had regard to all matters raised, including that the site is on the edge of a settlement close to a range of services and public transport, but

conclude that this does not outweigh the conflict I have found with the development plan and the harm to the character and appearance of the countryside and the Meon gap. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR