
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 June 2026

by **S Harrington MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 June 2026

Appeal Ref: 6005381

Stables at Manor Farm House, East Grimstead, Salisbury SP5 3RT

- 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 & Mrs Mullens against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/09512.
 - The development proposed is erection of a dwelling with associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As the site address that appears on the planning application form is incomplete, I have utilised the full address shown on the Council's Decision Notice in the banner heading above which provides a more accurate description of the location.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the site is a suitable location for the proposal, having particular regard to the local development strategy and access to services and facilities; and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Location

4. Core Policy 1 and Core Policy 2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy 2015 (WCS) provide the local development strategy and identifies settlements where sustainable development will take place. The WCS identifies East Grimstead as a small village and notes that small villages have a low level of services and facilities, and few employment opportunities. For the purposes of the WCS, East Grimstead has no defined limits of development or settlement boundary, and in such locations, WCS Core Policy 2 limits, subject to other provisions, development to infill within the existing built area.
5. The appellant has agreed that the proposal would not constitute infill development, and on the substantive evidence before me, including my observations of nearby residential development, I see no reason to disagree. Therefore, the principle of the proposal would conflict with the requirements of WCS Core Policy 2.

Nevertheless, my attention has also been brought to the availability of sustainable modes of transport that would enable future occupants to access services and facilities.

6. In this regard, East Grimstead lacks the range of services and facilities required for day-to-day living. However, there is a bus stop near the appeal site. Nonetheless, whilst the bus service does connect to locations with a full range of services and facilities, including a train station which enables onward travel, the frequency of buses are limited, with no buses on Saturdays, Sundays or public holidays.
7. Furthermore, even if the proposal could provide an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging point, there is no certainty that future occupiers would utilise EVs. Therefore, although some trips could be undertaken by public transport, I find future occupiers would be likely to rely on the use of private vehicles to access those services and facilities that are reasonably required for day-to-day living.
8. However, the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) recognises that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and given the movements associated with a single dwelling and that some trips could be made by a sustainable mode of transport, the resulting harm is modest.
9. To conclude, the site would not be a suitable location for the proposal, having particular regard to the local development strategy and access to services and facilities. The proposal would conflict with WCS Core Policy 1, Core Policy 2, Core Policy 23, Core Policy 60 and Core Policy 61. These policies seek, amongst other things, to allow appropriate growth to provide for the most sustainable pattern of development within Wiltshire which seeks to reduce the need to travel and promote sustainable forms of transport.

Character and appearance

10. The appeal site is part of a field within a Special Landscape Area with the surrounding area having an attractive rural and verdant character. Nearby residential built form is sporadic, with the appeal site representing a notable break in residential built form giving it the perception of being within the countryside.
11. I observed that there is existing built form at the appeal site. Even if this does not benefit from planning permission as stated by the Council, it is modest in scale and has a rural character associated with the existing use of the land, with the site presenting as a largely undeveloped part of the countryside that positively contributes to the attractive character area of the area.
12. The proposal would introduce a residential dwelling onto the appeal site which whilst of a form, appearance and featuring materials appropriate to the local vernacular, would nevertheless, in combination with associated domestic paraphernalia, result in a sub-urbanisation of the appeal site.
13. I accept the proposal would not appear as an entirely unexpected or incompatible element in the landscape given its design and existing residential development near the appeal site. However, the proposal would result in further additional sporadic urban development and associated residential activity within the countryside qualitatively different from the existing rural character of the appeal site, notably and significantly harmfully eroding the rural character of the area.

14. Whilst the existing mature hedge does provide some screening, the deciduous nature of the existing hedge, combined with any future maintenance would result in the proposal being evident, particularly during the winter months. Moreover, due to the proposal's height and the elevated ground level of the appeal site above the road and opposing dwelling, it would be noticeable both in views through the access and from the highway, even if it did not present as an overbearing feature when viewed from the neighbouring property. As such, I do not consider that planning conditions, including the potential removal of 'permitted development' rights or additional landscaping would be sufficient to overcome the harm.
15. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with WCS Core Policy 51, Core Policy 57 and saved Policy C6 of the Salisbury District Local Plan 2003 (LP). These policies, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development is well integrated and makes a positive contribution to the character of Wiltshire's rural environment and creates a strong sense of place through drawing on the local context and being complementary to the locality.

Other Matters

16. Planning permission¹ has been granted at the appeal site for an agricultural barn/stable block ('the fallback'). Given the existence of planning permission, and that the potential erection of the building has been raised by the appellant, I consider that there is a real prospect of the fallback development taking place. As such, it constitutes a clear fallback position against which to assess the appeal proposal.
17. The fallback development is similar to the appeal proposal in terms of footprint, massing and scale. However, the fallback development has the character and appearance of a utilitarian rural building due to the lack of glazing and general domestic features. The appeal proposal incorporates domestic fenestration detail with large areas of glazing at ground floor level and also punctuating the roof line. Whilst the roadside elevation only features a modest window, the character of the appeal development is notably more residential. Moreover, the residential use of the appeal site would result in domestic paraphernalia and an overall domestication of the appeal site and therefore an encroachment of residential development into the countryside.
18. As such, I find that this fallback would have a notably lesser impact on the character and appearance of the area than the appeal proposal. As a result, the potential for fallback to be implemented is a matter that carries modest weight.
19. The Council are unable to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply of deliverable housing sites stating that their supply is 2.42 years. I have not been made aware of any areas or assets of particular importance as denoted by footnote 7 of the Framework that would provide a strong reason for refusing the development proposed and as such, Paragraph 11 d)ii of the Framework is engaged.
20. The proposal would achieve an increase in housing supply within an area with an acknowledged lack of housing provision. However, whilst acknowledging that small

¹ PL/2025/03227

sites cumulatively are important to overall supply, the benefit to housing delivery is modest given the small scale of the proposal for a single dwelling.

21. Furthermore, there would be modest short term economic benefits from the construction of the proposal. Further modest economic and social benefits would flow from the future occupation of the dwelling and associated spending in the locality.
22. However, the proposal conflicts with the local development strategy which seeks to achieve appropriate growth to provide for the most sustainable pattern of development in the area. It is also in a location where future occupiers would be reliant on the use of private vehicles to access services and facilities that are reasonably required for everyday living, resulting in modest harm. Moreover, the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
23. The proposal is therefore contrary to WCS Core Policy 1, Core Policy 2, Core Policy 23, Core Policy 51, Core Policy 57, Core Policy 60 and Core Policy 61, LP Policy C6 and conflicts with the development plan as a whole.
24. Given the housing supply position and that the locational strategy for the delivery of development needs to deliver a Framework compliant supply of housing land, I attach moderate weight to the conflict with the development plan policies that set the approach to the location of development. However, the Framework is clear that new development should be directed to sustainable locations and add to the overall quality of an area. It highlights that development should be sympathetic to local character and conserve the natural and local environment. The development plan policies in relation to these matters that the scheme conflicts with are broadly consistent with the Framework. As such, and due to the degree of harm I have identified, I give the conflict with these policies substantial weight.
25. While the proposal would align with the objectives of the Framework which seek to significantly boost housing supply, I have found the contribution to housing supply to be a modest benefit alongside other modest benefits. The adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Therefore, the proposal would not represent sustainable development.
26. The appeal site is within the catchment of the River Test/Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC), and the proposal has the potential for adverse effects alone or in combination to the Solent designated sites (Solent Maritime SAC, Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA)) with other developments through increased nitrogen in the catchment.
27. The appeal site is also within the zone of influence of the New Forest SPA, New Forest SAC and New Forest Ramsar site. In such an area, new residential development would lead to increased levels of recreational activity. This would be likely to have a significant effect on the designated features of the sites either on its own or cumulatively with other similar development, without avoidance measures.
28. Notwithstanding, Regulation 63(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 indicates the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment is only

necessary where the competent authority is minded to give consent for the proposal.

29. Given my conclusions, it is not necessary for me to consider this matter any further as the proposal would not take place and would not affect the habitat sites. Moreover, even if I were to find that suitable mitigation had been appropriately secured, a lack of harm would only be a neutral factor.

Conclusion

30. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. No material considerations, individually or cumulatively, outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

S Harrington

INSPECTOR