
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 June 2026

by **Ben Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2026

Appeal Ref: 6006035

Woodside End Stables, Greenhill, Royal Wootton Bassett SN4 8EH

- 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 Mr R & Mrs N McCormack against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref is PL/2025/09044.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 1 No new dwelling in lieu of existing stables and welfare facilities.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal is for permission in principle. The 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 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second, 'technical details consent' (TDC) stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent TDC application if permission in principle is granted. The Council's objections relate to location and access to services and facilities. I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development, with specific reference to access to services and facilities.

Reasons

Location

5. The application site lies outside any designed settlement as defined within the Wiltshire Core Strategy (2015) (CS). CS Policies 1 and 2 seek to direct new residential development to the existing urban areas and defined settlements to meet the general aims of promoting sustainable development and the protection of the countryside.

6. CS Policy 19 sets out that development in the Royal Wootton Bassett and Cricklade Community Area should be in accordance with the Settlement Strategy set out in CS Policy 1.
7. Development elsewhere in rural areas will be strictly limited but may exceptionally be permitted in line with the provisions of Policy H4. The proposal would not comprise of development that meets the exceptions set out in this policy.
8. Whilst Policy CP48 does broadly support the conversion and re-use of rural buildings, a replacement to the existing structures is proposed, and therefore it does meet the criterion of that policy.
9. The adjacent site to the south at Brockhurst Stables had the benefit of a Lawful Development Certificate¹ (LDC) for the use of the one the buildings as a dwelling with subsequent applications for replacements meeting the criterion of Policy CP48. The evidence before me suggest that the appeal site does not have a similar LDC, and as such is not directly comparable.
10. Whilst not isolated in that there is adjacent development, and the appeal site currently comprises of a stables and other structures, and therefore is previously developed, the proposal does not therefore meet any of the circumstances for new development within the countryside set out before me in the CS. I conclude that the appeal site is not a suitable location for housing having regard to the development strategy for the area and therefore conflicts with CS Policies 1, 2 and 19, which seeks to control the distribution of housing.

Services and Facilities

11. The appeal site lies near to the end of Greenhill, a single track dead end lane that extends off the main highway. Whilst there are a number of dwellings on Greenhill and some various businesses, such as Oxleaze Business Park which may provide some employment opportunities, there are no other services and facilities on the lane.
12. I observed that the nearest settlements with significant services and facilities, such as Purton or Lydiard Millicent, are some significant distance from the appeal site. The nearest bus stop is located near the junction of Greenhill and the main highway, however, this would require traversing almost the entire length of the lane, partly uphill from the appeal site, and without the benefit of footpaths (other than a very small section) nor lighting. This bus stop is not therefore convenient in neither distance nor access.
13. Whilst an electric charging point may be provided, there is no suggested condition before me that would secure one. Even if this was the case, there is no mechanism before me to guarantee that future occupiers of the site would make use of it. As such there would be limited demonstrable benefit in this regard.
14. As such, for future occupiers there would be no safe and convenient access to any services and facilities by any other means than the private car. It is recognised in the Framework that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, however it is evident that even in this context, the appeal site is not well connected.

¹ Application reference 18/02724/CLE

15. The above mentioned approval for a dwelling following a permission for conversion (Brockhurst Farm Stables) has differing circumstances in terms of policy setting and fallback. The two further Inspector decisions² referred to are some distance from the appeal site, which would not have the exact same characteristic in terms of their location and distance to various services and facilities. These are not directly comparable to the appeal scheme, therefore.
16. A planning permission for Traveller Pitches³ with the same postcode is referenced. The position of this site is unclear and its proximity to bus stops/services and facilities, including schools etc, which prevents direct comparison. Similarly, little information is put forward regarding an approved scheme at Greenhil at the Claypits⁴, which also prevents direct comparison. However, even if the distances are similar, for the reasons set out above, I have found different in terms of this matter to the decision of the Council in that instance.
17. The existing site is an equestrian facility. No substantive information is before me in relation to resultant highway trips compared to a residential use to enable direct comparison. Moreover, such a development is considered under different planning policies and aims in terms of its location and access to services and facilities to the proposed residential scheme.
18. I conclude that the appeal site is not a suitable location for housing having regard to access to services and facilities. The proposal would conflict with CS Policies 60 and 61, which seek to reduce the need to travel particularly by private car and will encourage the sustainable, safe and efficient movement of people, by amongst other matters, by directing development to accessible locations and in promoting the use of sustainable transport solutions.

Other Matters

19. The appeal site is within the inner zone of influence of the North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (SAC), which is a European Site as defined by the Habitats Regulations. Consequently, it is necessary for me to consider the effect of the proposal on the integrity of the SAC.
20. North Meadow is an exceptional example of a lowland meadow with world class populations of snakeshead fritillary flowers. The conservation objectives for the SAC are to ensure the integrity of the site is maintained or restored as appropriate and ensure that the site contributes to achieving the favourable conservation status of its qualifying features. An assessment of the proposed possible effect on the integrity of the SAC is therefore necessary.
21. However, given that, as set out below, I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I am not pursuing this matter further because it could not lead me to a different decision.
22. Whilst not a reason for refusal, the officer report raises issue with the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surroundings. Again, given that I am dismissing the proposal for other reasons, I have also not considered this matter further.

² Appeal reference APP/Y3940/W/24/3345598 & APP/Y3940/W/25/3367502

³ Application reference PL/2024/07482

⁴ Application reference PL/2023/04820

Planning Balance and Conclusion

23. The proposal would result in an additional unit of accommodation which would contribute to the Government's broader objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The development would make efficient use of the site, as supported by the Framework. The proposal would also result in a short-term economic benefits arising from the construction process. Economic and social benefits are also likely to arise from the occupation of the new dwelling. However, given the quantum of development in this case, each of these benefits would be minor.
24. The proposal would conflict with the housing strategy in the development plan. CS Policies 1, 2 and 19 are broadly consistent with the Framework where it states that the planning system should actively manage patterns of growth. Given the current significant shortfall, the housing strategy policies are not currently providing sufficient housing. As such I give the conflict with these policies minor weight.
25. CS Policies 60 and 61 are broadly consistent with the Framework where it states that the planning system should seeks to maximise sustainable transport solutions. As such, the conflict with this policy should be given significant weight in this appeal.
26. Given the conflict identified above, the development would conflict with the development plan as a whole.
27. The Council confirms that they are unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply and put the current figure at 2.42 years supply. Paragraph 11d)ii of the Framework is therefore engaged.
28. The proposal would align with the Framework where it seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing and acknowledges that small-scale developments can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirement and be built out quickly. Whilst the scale of the proposal is limited, given the considerable scale of the shortfall identified, this attracts moderate weight.
29. The economic and social benefits from the build and occupation of the dwelling as well as support for local services, facilities and the community, including those in other villages would be limited given the size of the development, and their weight in favour of the scheme is also minor.
30. The development would also deliver ecological benefits associated with the requirement to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain. However, this would be at TDC stage, if that was forthcoming. Even if it was considered a benefit at this stage, given the scale of development, the benefit would be minor.
31. There is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that a conversion of the existing single storey stables would be forthcoming were this appeal to fail, and as such, as a fallback position, it carries little weight.
32. The proposal would conflict with the Framework where it seeks to actively manage patterns of growth and seeks to maximise sustainable transport solutions. Given the importance the Framework gives to actively managing patterns of growth in support of sustainable transport and sustainable development generally, I give significant weight to this matter.

33. Consequently, the adverse impacts set out above would 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.
34. The weight to be given to benefits and harms is a matter for the decision maker. This is in accordance with the application⁵ and appeal referred to in relation to this matter.
35. The proposal is contrary to the development plan as a whole and there are no other material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ben Phillips

INSPECTOR

⁵ application reference PL/2025/00998