

Notwithstanding previous conclusions drawn by the Landscape Officer who originally dealt with the application, I have reviewed the application in its entirety in order to draw my own conclusions.

The planning case officer will include a description of the site and its surroundings and I will therefore not repeat this here, but instead focus on the key landscape issues.

This appeal relates to amendments to extant permission 16/00320/FUL, which include moving the proposed dwelling 4m further east, adding additional rooflights and alteration to site levels. These all have consequences in terms of landscape character and visual amenity.

The appellant has submitted a number of views with visualisations of the existing situation, the approved scheme and the proposed amended scheme (which is the subject of this appeal). There are a number of issues with the proposed viewpoints.

- a. The views were all taken in summer, so do not show the maximum visibility scenario (as described in the GLVIA3).
- b. No views to the north of the site have been included (despite one view being identified in the Village Design Statement as important).
- c. The views (Existing, Approved, and Proposed) do not use the same baseline photograph, which makes comparison either impossible or inaccurate.
- d. The visualisation in View 2 shows the approved building as higher in the landscape than the proposed scheme but the appellant's drawing 'Context Elevations South: Proposed' (1501b_08_P1) clearly shows that the approved dwelling sits lower in the landscape than the proposed.
- e. All of the 'approved' views fail to accurately show the new planting that was proposed as part of this scheme (shown on T2 drawing 1501_02_P2 – 'Block Plan'), making the approved dwelling appear more visually prominent than it would be once the vegetation has established. Conversely, the 'proposed' views include the new planting proposed as part of the appeal scheme (TGD drawing 1516_0103_Rev B, Sept 17, with Rev on 28.11.17). The result is that the approved scheme appears more visually prominent in the visualisations than the proposed amended scheme, which is inaccurate. The repositioning of the dwelling 4m further east, and set higher in the landscape, will make the proposed (appeal) scheme much more visually prominent than the approved scheme.

The refusal of planning permission cited a number of policy reasons for refusal. I have addressed each of these below:

CP13 – the development does not make a positive contribution to the local environment, as the dwelling's position within the site would result in it being visually prominent from a number of local public viewpoints and its proposed predominant material (off white/light grey render) would make its visual intrusion even more pronounced than it might otherwise be. Large sections of glazing are proposed on the south east corner and along the eastern elevation, which are the most visually prominent sides of the development. Glazing creates glare and therefore can be highly visible within a countryside setting such as this. The altered position of the dwelling, 4m forward of the approved scheme, will make these elements more highly visible from key viewpoints on the PROWs that run up to Yew Hill. The additional rooflights noted in the Design and Access Statement would also create

additional reflections, which would be seen from viewpoints located on higher ground, such as from Yew Hill.

CP18 – the Compton Street settlement gap indicates the importance of this area of countryside bordering Oliver’s Battery. However, although the proposed dwelling is larger than the demolished dwelling on site, its scale does not appear to be of a sufficient size to say that its presence would physically or visually diminish the gap.

CP20 – this policy supports development which recognises, protects and enhances the District’s distinctive landscape and heritage assets and their settings (designated or undesignated). This area of countryside has a distinctive character, which is made up of the open access grazing land to the west and the valley sides upon which this site sits, and that rise away to the east. This landscape is also historically and culturally important, given the presence of tumuli (Scheduled Ancient Monument) and the important role the area plays in the social and recreational life of Oliver’s Battery residents. The proposed development does not protect or enhance this distinctive character or setting, by virtue of its visual prominence in the views from local PROWs, which offer sweeping views of this landscape. The proposal would be highly visible and detract from the overall appreciation of the landscape. This differs from the approved scheme, whose set back and lower position in the landscape would make it less visually prominent.

DM15 – the development does not conserve or enhance the ‘key characteristics’ identified in the Oliver’s Battery Village Design Statement (July 2008). This document states clearly that “Further development of this site should be resisted since it is contrary to countryside policies and located within the Winchester-Compton Gap” (LT1, p.15). It also states that “Consideration should be given “...to the materials used for the exterior of each dwelling, which should be in keeping with that used in neighbouring dwellings” (p.19). The neighbouring dwelling in this case is a timber chalet style construction. The development does not conserve or enhance this open area of countryside on the edge of Oliver’s Battery, which contributes the special quality of the area, due to the visual intrusion caused by the proposals.

DM16 – the development does provide boundary treatments that respond positively to the local context around the site. The choice of off white/light grey render for most of the building is not out of keeping with other houses along the edge of Oliver’s Battery. However, this building is set much further into the countryside and therefore by mimicking materials of the settlement, rather than choosing materials in keeping with the neighbouring property, which are much more visually recessive, the development brings an urbanising influence into the countryside setting which results in a development that does not respond positively to the character of the local environment, and is not appropriate to the context. This urbanising influence was a consideration in the approved scheme, but given the position of the dwelling cut down into the land, and benefitting from a mature boundary of hedgerow and trees, it was considered to be acceptable. Bringing the dwelling forward would make the dwelling more visually prominent and therefore the urbanising influence would be greater.

DM17 – these issues do not relate to landscape character or visual amenity but may be relevant (Case officer to comment).

DM23 – The proposed development would have an unacceptable effect on the rural character of the area, by means of visual intrusion. The alterations made to the approved scheme will result in the south east and eastern elevations being more visual intrusive than in the approved scheme, even with the proposed soft landscape scheme being implemented. This is because the most affected public viewpoints are elevated and therefore boundary vegetation will have less effect. Any changes to the land surrounding the proposed development are as important in the wider landscape as the proposed dwelling itself. This is because the land runs down the valley, and forms part of the dominant valley landscape that makes up the area's unique character.

DM23 states that any ancillary or minor development that may occur as a result of the main proposal must be considered. As the land forms part of the overall landholding of the appellant, this land could be used for domestic purposes (ornamental gardening, ancillary structures, children's play equipment, keeping of animals) which would radically change the nature of the valley side and be detrimental to rural character. The remodelling of the landscape changes the unique valley landscape within which this site sits, and in addition, the potential for the introduction of ancillary elements is of particular concern, as it would drastically change the rural character of the valley. The development would detract from the enjoyment of the countryside from public rights of way as it will be more prominent in views from PROWs as they rise up Yew Hill than the approved scheme.

In conclusion, the proposed amended scheme may on paper appear to only propose minor changes, but due to the sensitive visual receptors and landscape within which the site sits, these 'minor' changes would have a significant impact upon the landscape. Moving the proposed dwelling further east would expose the glazed corner of the building and rendered eastern elevation to views from a number of key public viewpoints up Yew Hill (despite a well-designed soft landscape scheme). The render and glare from the glazed elements would make the dwelling even more visually prominent than it might otherwise be, and this would introduce an urbanising influence into a rural landscape of cultural and historical importance. The remodelling of the land, as well as potential future uses, would harm even further the valley sides, which are a unique element of this landscape.