



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2017

by Andrew Owen BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/W/17/3175822

**Land to the east of Pine Lodge, Dinmore, Bodenham, Hereford,
Herefordshire HR1 3JR**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appellant is shown on the appeal forms as being 'care of agent' and the appeal is against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
 - The application Ref 163115, dated 4 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 26 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a new house and detached garage to replace the collection of previously inhabited structures on land to the west of Bodenham Manor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would be located such that its future occupiers would have acceptable access to goods and services.

Reasons

Policy Background

3. It is not disputed by the parties that the Council only have a 4.39 year supply of housing. As such paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') advises that all policies for the supply of housing should be deemed to be out of date. Policy RA3 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy (the 'Core Strategy') has contributed to the Council's failure to provide a five year supply of housing in so far as it relates to the provision of housing in rural locations, and I therefore give it little weight. However Policy MT1 of the Core Strategy relates to traffic management and so, in my view, has little influence on the supply of housing and I can give it significant weight.
4. Notwithstanding this, in light of the lack of a five year supply of housing, paragraph 14 of the Framework is enabled, which states that planning permission should be granted unless any adverse effects of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.

Access to goods and services

5. Bodenham is a small settlement with little in the way of services apart from a school, church and a bus stop. These are all in the centre of the settlement

and, as confirmed by the appellant, are around half a mile from the site. There are more facilities in Bodenham Moor, but this is significantly further from the site.

6. There is no defined settlement boundary for Bodenham in the Core Strategy and though one is suggested in the Bodenham Neighbourhood Plan, I understand this is yet to be adopted and the Council suggest no weight can be afforded to it. The site is within the Bodenham Conservation Area, but this also has little relevance to the extent of the built up part of the settlement.
7. From my site visit I saw that the proposal would be substantially detached from all nearby development. It would be a significant distance west of Bodenham Manor which is the nearest development between the site and the centre of Bodenham. Consequently the development would be spatially isolated from the rest of the settlement. Also, although its point of access to the highway is proximate to a few other dwellings, the long length of the access driveway means the dwelling and garage would be separate from these buildings too. I note the site has ready access to services such as electricity, but this has little effect on its degree of isolation.
8. Though the distance to the centre of the settlement is not great enough to be inaccessible by foot or cycle, the route is unlit and does not have pavements. I consider it therefore makes these travel options less attractive than making such a journey by car. Notwithstanding this, whilst the limited range of facilities in Bodenham do provide some services for local residents, for day to day needs it is likely that future residents would need to travel further afield. This adds to the proposal's sense of isolation.
9. I accept the settlement is suitable for some proportionate housing development, and I note paragraph 55 of the Framework supports housing in areas where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of local communities. However, I consider the benefit of one additional house to Bodenham would be minimal. Moreover paragraph 55 also guards against isolated homes in the countryside, which is what I would consider this dwelling to be.
10. The site does accommodate a number of dilapidated structures and it is agreed between the parties that there has been some historic residential use at the site. However that use appears to have long since ceased and from my site visit the remaining structures did not appear to be permanent in nature, notwithstanding the length of time that they may have been on site. As such I would not consider the site to be previously developed land as defined by the Framework. In any event, this matter does weigh heavily in my considerations.
11. Reference is made to other developments nearby. However, from the limited details I have of them, they appear to be more congruent with the built up areas of their settlements and do not have the same degree of isolation as the scheme before me. One example is further from a bus stop than the development before me, but this does not render the location of the current proposal to be acceptable.
12. Accordingly, I consider that the development would be isolated and would not provide acceptable access to goods and services. It therefore would fail to accord with Policy MT1 which aims to reduce the number of short car journeys, and paragraph 55 of the Framework which discourages isolated homes in the

countryside. It would also conflict with Policy RA3 which seeks to restrict housing in rural locations, albeit I give this conflict limited weight.

Other matters

13. It has not been suggested to me that the proposal would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Bodenham Conservation Area, and I have no reason to come to a different view.
14. The site is within 2km buffer zone of the Dinmore Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), the River Lugg SSSI and the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC). However as the proposal is limited in its scale, it is unlikely that the development would result in additional pressure on the SSSIs or SAC and therefore would not have a significant effect on them.

Planning balance and conclusion

15. The Council raises no objection to the design of the development or its impact on the local landscape and I have no reason to disagree. I give this matter neutral weight as this would be expected of any development. The provision of a house to contribute to the Council's supply would be beneficial. However I consider the failure of the proposal to provide acceptable access to goods and services means that the adverse impact on the social dimension of sustainable development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As such the proposal would not constitute sustainable development.
16. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all other considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Owen

INSPECTOR