
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2017

by David Richards BSocSci DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 06 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/W/17/3172791

Land adjacent to Oldfield House, Main Road, Ombersley, WR9 0JQ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Bishop against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
 - The application Ref W15/03242/PN, dated 18 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 19 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a dormer bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect on the settlement pattern in Wychavon, having regard to the countryside location.

Reasons

3. The development plan for the area is the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) adopted in February 2016. Policy SWDP 1 sets out a commitment to pursuing sustainable development, in accordance with the approach set out in the Framework. Policy SWDP 2 sets out the development strategy and settlement hierarchy for the District. A guiding principle is to focus most development on the urban areas, where both housing needs and accessibility to lower-cost public services are greatest. Section C of the policy provides that development in the open countryside (defined as land beyond any development boundary) will be strictly controlled, except for defined exceptions which do not include the type of development proposed in this case. Policy SWDP 4 requires that proposals for development offer genuinely sustainable travel choices and minimise demand for travel.
4. The reasoned justification to Policy SWDP 2 states that the high quality countryside is an important planning attribute of the area. Sites beyond development boundaries generally are less sustainable as access to local services and employment opportunities tends to be poorer and therefore it is appropriate that development in the open countryside is restricted.
5. The appeal site lies to the north of the village of Ombersley, in an area defined as countryside in the SWDP. It is set on the A449 in a small group of linear frontage development. The site forms part of the rear garden of Oldfield House,

and would be accessed from the lane at the rear. There are a number of pockets of sporadic development in the vicinity of the site, but they are clearly part of the countryside, which is recognised in the Framework for its intrinsic character and beauty.

6. It is not disputed that the proposal would conflict with Policy SWDP2 C, which is a fundamental pillar of the development strategy for Wychavon. The policies of the SWDP are up to date having been adopted in 2016 and the planning authority is able to demonstrate a robust 5 year supply of housing land. Planning applications and appeals should be decided in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
7. I acknowledge that there are a number of facilities such as shops, a pub and a medical centre within reasonable walking distance, including those in Ombersley itself, although the route would in part be alongside the busy dual carriageway. While there is also a regular bus service along the A449, travel towards Worcester by bus would involve crossing the busy A449 dual carriageway or walking into Ombersley to another stop, and the same would apply to a return journey from the Kidderminster direction. Either option would tend to deter usage. The likelihood is that future residents would be car dependent for most purposes. In any event, this does not outweigh the harm to settlement strategy and the conflict with the local plan.
8. I note the Council has approved some other dwellings in the surrounding area, including two dwellings on Oldfield Lane, and two at The Deans. I am unaware of the precise circumstances which led to the grant of permission, but I note they pre-date the adoption of the SWDP, which now forms the statutory plan for the area.
9. The Framework lays great emphasis on plan led development. In this case the policies of the development plan are up to date, and clearly indicate that the appeal should be refused. The material considerations drawn to my attention by the appellant do not outweigh this conflict.
10. Accordingly, I dismiss the appeal.

David Richards

INSPECTOR