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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2017

**by B Bowker Mplan MRTPI**

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

**Decision date: 27<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/W/17/3171652**

**Land adjoining Lechmere, Hammock Road, Eckington, Pershore, Worcestershire WR10 3BJ**

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
  - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Simon & Carol Wagstaff against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
  - The application Ref W/16/02095/OU, dated 5 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2016.
  - The development proposed is erection of a single dwelling house on land to the south of Lechmere off Hammock Road Eckington.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Preliminary Matter

2. The proposal as submitted is for outline planning permission with all matters reserved for later consideration. The appeal has been determined on this basis. The layout and elevation plans submitted with the planning application have been taken into account for indicative purposes.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

### Reasons

4. The appeal site is part of a garden area with an outbuilding and is surrounded by open countryside to the north, east and west. The site is located outside the development boundary of Eckington as reviewed and defined by Policy SWDP 2 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP). Consequently, for planning purposes the site occupies an open countryside location. Policy SWDP 2 seeks to strictly control development in the open countryside. The proposal would fail to meet any of the exceptions listed within this policy.
5. During my site visit I saw that the openness of the appeal site ensures separation between Lechmere, Hazeldene and Little World. This separation contributes to the open rural character prevalent at the site and its immediate surroundings. I also observed the expanded tourist facilities at The Manor House, which I understand is outside the development boundary. Nonetheless

the open and rural character of the site and its immediate surroundings distinguish it from the built form at Eckington and The Manor House complex to the south east.

6. Whilst design, layout and scale are reserved matters and a split level low profile design is intended, the proposal would unavoidably harm the open rural character at the site and its vicinity. Furthermore, when built, in conjunction with adjoining properties, the dwelling would consolidate built form where an open rural character currently prevails. This resultant harm would not be prevented by the limitations to further development presented by the river Avon.
7. Therefore the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently the proposal would be contrary to policies SWDP 2, SWDP 21 and SWDP 25 which are of most relevance to this matter. Combined these policies seek to ensure that development is of a high quality design that integrates effectively with its surroundings and reinforces local distinctiveness.

#### *Other Matters*

8. Based on the limited information before me, I am unable to fully consider the small scale residential permissions<sup>1</sup> referred to by the appellant. Moreover, I must determine the appeal on its own individual merits. In addition, as outlined by the Council, development at The Manor House was subject to different planning policies relating to the conversion of rural buildings.
9. A number of benefits are associated with the proposal which includes its contribution towards housing supply, envisaged energy efficient design and its support to local services and construction employment. In addition, the Council<sup>2</sup> acknowledge that the site has access to services and facilities. The proposal has also received written local support. Based on the scale of the proposal, these benefits attract modest favourable weight.
10. It is intended that the development would be a 'one off' work home unit that would benefit a local family with strong links to the community. However, whilst I can understand the wishes of the appellants, such personal circumstances seldom outweigh general planning considerations. Thus limited weight is afforded to these personal circumstances.
11. The above noted benefits would be outweighed by the harm of the proposal identified to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

#### **Conclusion**

12. For the reasons given above, and having taken all matters raised into account, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

*B Bowker*  
INSPECTOR

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<sup>1</sup> Council Refs, 14/0019, 14/02130 and 14/02632

<sup>2</sup> Within the Council's delegated decision report