



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2020

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28th January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/20/3258688

The Dog In The Lane Inn, Astley, Shrewsbury, SY4 4BU

- 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 C Evans against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02185/OUT, dated 4 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is outline application for the erection of one detached dwelling and access with all other matters reserved.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The application is in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration except for the means of access. Drawings showing an indicative layout of the development were submitted with the application, and I have had regard to these in determining this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the appeal site is in a suitable location for residential development with regard to accessibility to services, facilities, and public transport, and the provisions of the development plan.

Reasons

4. Policy CS4 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011) states that in rural areas investment will be focused into identified Community Hubs and Community Clusters. The appeal site is not located within one of these settlements and is therefore in the countryside for planning purposes. In this regard, Core Strategy Policy CS5 and Policy MD7a of the Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development ('SAMDev') Plan (2015) seek to strictly control new market housing development in the countryside. A number of exceptions are listed in these policies, none of which would apply to the appeal proposal.
5. The appeal site is located within Upper Astley, which is a hamlet next to the A53. It consists of a short ribbon of housing development and a public house, but otherwise contains very few services or facilities. The nearest convenience stores, primary schools, or post office are located some distance away in either Hadnall, Shawbury or on the edge of Shrewsbury. However, the route to both

Shrewsbury and Shawbury is along the A53, which is a busy main road with fast moving traffic and no pedestrian footway along much of its length. This route would be dangerous to walk along and the speed and volume of traffic is likely to discourage cycling. Moreover, the route to Hadnall (and to Astley) is along narrow unlit country lanes with no pedestrian footway. It is therefore unlikely that future occupiers would walk or cycle to these settlements on a regular basis, and to do so after dark would be dangerous.

6. A bus stop is located on the other side of the A53 that is served by the No 64. However, services along this route are relatively infrequent and run only hourly during most of the day, with no services on Sundays. This frequency of service is unlikely to offer a realistic alternative to the use of a private car.
7. In these circumstances, I consider that the site has poor accessibility to services and facilities and only limited accessibility to public transport. Accordingly, future occupiers would be reliant on the use of a private car.
8. My attention has been drawn to an allowed appeal decision¹ in Shropshire that also related to a single dwelling outside of the identified Community Hubs and Clusters. However, that site was in walking distance of services and facilities in the market town of Church Stretton, to which it was connected by a pavement with street lighting. That is not the case here. Accordingly, I have come to my own view on the appeal proposal rather than relying on the approach taken by my colleague in different circumstances.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal site is not in a suitable location for residential development with regard to accessibility to services, facilities, and public transport, and the provisions of the development plan. It is contrary to Policy CS5 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011) and Policy MD7a of the SAMDev Plan (2015) in this regard.

Other Matters

10. The proposed access point has good visibility in both directions and is already used to access the existing car park. In my view, this would represent a safe and suitable access for the development.
11. Reference is made to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the need to support the hospitality sector. However, at this stage the full economic effects of Covid-19 and the speed of any recovery cannot be fully known. I return to the economic benefits of the development in my Overall Balance and Conclusion, below.
12. The current use of the site as a car park is not unsightly and any visual benefit associated with the development would therefore be minor.
13. The development would be constructed to modern energy efficiency standards and would provide a new electronic vehicle charging point. However, these are ordinary requirements for new development, and they do not represent a positive benefit.

¹ APP/L3245/W/16/3149461

Overall Balance and Conclusion

14. As set out above, the development would not be in an appropriate location for residential development, including with reference to its accessibility. It would be contrary to the development plan in this regard.
15. Set against this, the development would provide a new dwelling and would involve the redevelopment of brownfield land. It would also generate some economic benefits during the construction phase and would provide financial support to the existing public house.
16. In these circumstances, I do not consider that the benefits outweigh the harm associated with the development. Accordingly, the material considerations in this case do not indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR