



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 September 2023

by H Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/W/22/3308460

Land Adjacent Broadmead, Glewstone, Nr. Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Andrew Jackson (Man of Ross Ltd) against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
 - The application Ref 221402, dated 27 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 7 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of three detached dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these stages.
3. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted¹. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent Technical Details Consent application if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issues

4. The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development, with particular regard to:
 - the effect on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the effect on the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

Reasons

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal site is a parcel of agricultural field that extends alongside the north-western side of a public highway (C1248). An existing farm track runs along

¹ PPG Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615

the north of the site. The site itself is rectangular in shape and forms part of a wider domed field that rises towards the site's rear. Its surface is around 2m above the level of the road with an embankment and mature hedgerow intervening. A public footpath runs along a north-south axis on the wider field near its western boundary.

6. The appeal site is located to the eastern end of the village of Glewstone. The village of Glewstone comprises three clusters of built form. The cluster identified as Glewstone, is located around the crossroads to the southwest. The other two smaller clusters of dwellings are known as Broadmead and Newlands, which are located as peripheral areas.
7. The appeal site is located within the Broadmead area to the north of the highway (C1248). Broadmead is characterised by an established linear form of development positioned on the southeast of the highway. The existing dwellings have frontages that are clearly visible from the highway and are generally set within spacious plots. In contrast, the western side of the highway retains an unbuilt-up frontage with only one existing dwelling which is directly to the south of the appeal site. To the north and west of the site is agricultural fields, with mature hedgerows along the roadside.
8. The proposal would introduce built form onto the appeal site whose undeveloped and naturalised appearance visually distinguishes it as an obvious feature of the countryside rather than an intrinsic part of the settlement. It currently contributes significantly to maintaining the dispersed and rural character of this part of the settlement. Whilst the proposed development would be low density and it is intended to keep much of the existing mature hedgerow, the proposal would nevertheless erode the open attributes of the field.
9. Furthermore, given the elevated height of the site in relation to the highway, dwellings of one storey or more erected on the site would be prominent when viewed from the highway and the neighbouring dwellings. The formation of a new access from either the highway or the farm track would involve the loss of hedgerow, and would introduce hard, urban elements. These would be at odds with the soft appearance of the site.
10. Therefore, the presence of the dwellings, together with the associated hardstanding materials, would erode the undeveloped character of the site, which makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would appear as a dominant built form within an otherwise relatively undeveloped road frontage.
11. Moreover, the proposal would not adjoin the linear form of existing dwellings on the opposite side of the road and would bear no relation to the existing built-up area. Instead, it would be a small group of dwellings placed in a position that would be at odds with the overriding pattern of built form in the settlement and would appear incongruous as a result.
12. My attention has been drawn to a previous appeal case². However, the Inspector considered the layout of the proposed site to be consistent with the surrounding linear pattern of development and found that the site would be closely related to and able to be integrated to the form and layout of the

² Appeal ref: APP/W1850/W/19/3224840

existing settlement. As such, there are significant differences between that approval and the proposal before me. In any event, I have determined this appeal on its own merits and its site-specific characteristics.

13. My attention has also been drawn to a previous planning permission (ref: 214636), for the erection of one three-bedroom cottage with new vehicular access. Nevertheless, the site is within the garden to the east of Chapel Cottage and is located close to an existing cluster of dwellings. Its siting also does not stretch beyond the adjacent rear garden environment. Therefore, this is not directly comparable to the proposal before me, which would encroach into undeveloped agricultural land and would not respect the existing linear form of development. Furthermore, the full details of this approved development are not before me and the scheme for one dwelling is clearly of a different nature to the appeal proposal, so has limited bearing on the outcome of this appeal.
14. Consequently, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the site and its surroundings. It would therefore fail to accord with Policy RA2 of the Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy 2011-2031 (2015) (CS). Amongst other things, this policy seeks to ensure proposals demonstrate particular attention to the form, layout, character and setting of the site and its location in that settlement. It would also fail to accord with Policy LD1 of the CS, which amongst a number of principles, seeks to ensure that landscape and townscape has positively influenced development and that development conserves and enhances the beauty of the landscape. In addition, the proposal would fail to accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) (paragraph 130), which states that development should be sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting, and add to the overall qualities of the area.
15. I note reference to Policy SS4 within the decision notice. However, as this policy relates to movement and transportation, I do not find it to be relevant to the consideration of harm to the character and appearance of the area. Similarly, the decision notice refers to Policy SS7, however this policy relates to climate change. As such, I do not find it to be relevant to this main issue.

Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

16. The appeal site is located within the Wye Valley AONB. It is broadly characterised by the River Wye meandering through its lowland landscape, and dramatic gorges with sheer cliffs and steep wooden slopes, interspersed with broader valley reaches, with rounded hills and bluffs. The open and undeveloped nature of the appeal site contributes to this rural character.
17. Paragraph 176 of the Framework requires that I must give great weight to the conservation and enhancement of the landscape and scenic beauty of an AONB.
18. The proposal would be positioned towards the edge of the field on lower ground. The proposal would also be opposite existing development. Therefore, due to the site's topography sloping down towards the highway and screening from existing development and vegetation, the proposal would not appear unduly prominent in wider views from outside the site, including nearby public footpaths. Furthermore, planting of new hedgerow and intermittent trees along the sites northern and western boundaries would provide further screening, which could be secured by an appropriate planning condition at the technical

details consent stage. Therefore, the proposal would be visually contained from wider views.

19. Although the proposal would cause changes to views of the site and its roadside embankment when seen from the highway and neighbouring properties, these views would be localised.
20. In addition, the appellant has submitted a Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment which demonstrates the concealed nature of the appeal site from wider views. The findings of the assessment have not been contested by the Council and I have not been presented with any counter evidence to refute it.
21. Consequently, the proposed dwellings and any associated domestic garden paraphernalia would be seen within the context of the existing residential development and would be mostly screened from wider views by the higher ground to its rear. Given the siting and scope of the development and its immediate residential context, I find that there would be no adverse impacts to the AONB and that as such its landscape and scenic beauty would be conserved.
22. Therefore, for this main issue, the proposal would accord with Policy LD1 of the CS, which amongst other things, seeks to ensure proposals conserve and enhance the natural and scenic beauty of important landscape and features, including the AONB. It would also accord with the overarching objectives in the Wye Valley AONB Management Plan 2021-2026 (2021). In addition, the proposal would not conflict with the Framework in so far as it seeks to ensure developments respect and enhance the AONBs.

Other Matters

23. Glewstone is listed in Policy RA2 of the CS as a sustainable location for the delivery of housing, and the proposal would provide up to 3 dwellings. It would contribute to the local housing supply by adding to the mix of dwellings in the local area. It would also provide some direct and indirect social and economic benefits, including employment during the construction period. However, these benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area.
24. In addition to the matters I have addressed above, letters of objection from local residents have raised other concerns including traffic issues, drainage and wildlife. These other matters are not in dispute between the main parties and as I am dismissing the appeal, I do not need to give these matters further consideration.

Conclusion

25. Whilst a lack of harm has been found in regard to the proposal's effect on the Wye Valley AONB, this would be neutral in any planning balance.
26. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and there are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR