



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 June 2025

by **U P Han BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C3240/W/25/3364886

Land adjacent to Homecroft, Cheshire Coppice Lane, Admaston, Telford TF5 0BS

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Atwal against the decision of Telford and Wrekin Council.
 - The application Ref is TWC/2024/0682.
 - The development proposed is erection of single dwelling and formation and access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The planning application was submitted in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration except for access. I have had regard to the submitted plan which shows how the site might be developed but have treated this as indicative, apart from the details of the access when considering the likely impact of the proposal on the matters set out in the main issues below.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - whether the location of the appeal site is suitable for the proposed development having regard to the development plan; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character of the site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Location

4. Policy HO10 of the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2011-2031 (January 2018) (the TWLP) seeks to direct most new rural housing to sites with unimplemented planning permission. It also supports a limited amount of infill housing in the five named rural settlements of Edgmond, High Ercall, Lilleshall, Tibberton and Waters Upton. Elsewhere in the rural area, the policy indicates that housing development will be supported where proposals: are consistent with the exceptions set out in Policy HO11 (affordable rural exceptions), would result in the optimal use of a heritage asset, represent exceptional quality or innovative design or meet the essential need for rural worker dwellings.

5. I have not been advised that the appeal site has an unimplemented planning permission. The site is not within the five named rural settlements. The proposal does meet any of the criteria for development elsewhere in the rural area. The appellant accepts that the proposal conflicts with Policy HO10 but contends that material considerations justify a departure from the development plan. I will turn to material considerations later in my decision.
6. Policy SP3 supports development in the rural area where it would address the needs of rural communities. Development is directed to the reuse of previously developed land and to settlements with good infrastructure. Where development is proposed on best and most versatile agricultural, the policy states that the economic and other benefits of the land will be taken into account. I have not been advised as to the grade of the agricultural land of the appeal site. Even if it constituted best and most versatile land, given that the site forms a small part of a larger agricultural field, its loss would have a limited impact on the economic and other benefits of the land. Notwithstanding this, the appeal site does not constitute previously developed land nor is it within a settlement.
7. For the reasons given, the location of the appeal site is not suitable for the proposed development. Consequently, it would conflict with Policies SP3 and HO10 of the TWLP.
8. The Council's first reason for refusal refers to Policy HO11 of the TWLP which relates to affordable rural exceptions housing. The proposal would not constitute an affordable dwelling so Policy HO11 is not determinative on this main issue.
9. The first reason for refusal also refers to Policy SP4 of the TWLP which is a general policy supporting development that is in accordance with national and local policies, taking into account material considerations. I will return to this in my planning balance.

Character

10. The appeal site relates to part of an undeveloped field bordered by hedgerow. The site would be accessed by Cheshire Coppice Lane which is currently an unmade track with hedgerow on both sides. Within this context, despite the site's adjacency to Homecroft and its proximity to dwellings in Jockey Meadow, the site and the surrounding area retains a strong rural character. The field's undeveloped nature reinforces the sense of openness and contributes to the countryside character of the surrounding area.
11. While the plot size of the proposal would be broadly similar to Homecroft, it would nevertheless introduce built development into a largely uniform, open field, disrupting the visual cohesiveness and rural character of the site and the surrounding area.
12. The appellant contends that Homecroft could be considered as an incongruous, stand-alone development and as such, the proposal would assist in achieving a logical frontage to the west side of Cheshire Coppice Lane before the lane bends westwards. However, the proposal before me does not include for the development of the west side of Cheshire Coppice Lane. As such, this argument is insufficiently supported, and the proposal would appear incongruous against an otherwise open rural backdrop.

13. While the dwellings in Jockey Meadow are perceptible in Cheshire Coppice Lane, they are set back behind dense hedgerow which, together with the lane itself, maintains the rural character of the lane. The lane also provides a definitive visual boundary to the edge of the settlement. As such, there is a clear visual and spatial distinction between the built up area on the one side of the lane and the countryside on the other in this section of Cheshire Coppice Lane. The proposal would dilute the clear visual edge of the settlement and erode the rural character of the lane and the surrounding area.
14. Access to the appeal site would be via Cheshire Coppice Lane, which is currently an unmade track in a poor state of repair. The appellant's appeal statement indicates that the scheme would include for the resurfacing of Cheshire Coppice Lane and the provision of a passing place. I am content that such works would not significantly alter the character of the area or fail to respect the existing street pattern. Nonetheless, the proposal would introduce built form into a site where there currently is none, eroding its rural character.
15. For the reasons given, the proposed development would cause harm to the character of the site and the surrounding area. I judge the magnitude of this harm to be significant. Accordingly, the proposal would conflict with the Policy BE1 of the TWLP insofar as it requires development to respect and respond positively to its context.

Other Considerations

16. The proposal would deliver one additional house, contributing to the supply of housing in the area and supporting the Framework's aim of significantly boosting the supply of homes. The development could be built out relatively quickly and bring associated social and economic benefits both during and post construction. The site is adjacent to the settlement boundary and within easy walking distance of day to day services and facilities, including a school and a medical centre. It would therefore not be an isolated dwelling. However, given the small scale of the development, these benefits would be modest and attract moderate weight in the planning balance.
17. The appellant has pointed to the site's proximity to the proposed Bratton Green urban extension in the emerging Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2020-2040 (the eLP). While the proposed urban extension could potentially increase the sustainability of the appeal site, given the plan-making stage of the eLP, I can only afford this limited weight.
18. In support of the appeal, my attention has been drawn to two appeal decisions¹. In the Horton appeal, the Inspector noted that the proposal would be seen in a row of other properties and would therefore have a negligible effect on the character and appearance of the area. The Newport appeal did not involve the issue of character and appearance. Therefore, these appeals are materially different to the proposed development before me. In any event, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
19. The Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended by the Housing and Planning Act 2016) (the Act) places a duty on relevant authorities to keep a register of individuals and associations of individuals who wish to acquire serviced

¹ Ref. APP/C3240/W/20/3246180 and APP/C3240/W/24/3350998.

plots of land for their self-build or custom housebuilding. Local authorities are also subject to duties under sections 2 and 2A of the Act to have regard to this and to give enough suitable development permissions to meet the identified demand. While specific details have not been provided, the Council's Officer Report confirms that there is a shortfall of self-build and custom housing in the area.

20. The appellant has referred me to an appeal decision² where the Inspector stated that 'the main parties have agreed to the *wording of a condition that they believe* would secure the proposed dwellings as SBCH. Thus, if built, the proposal would be certain to contribute to the requirement, *if I were to accept that the condition was enforceable.*' (*My emphasis*). While the wording of the self-build condition was agreed by the main parties, there is nothing in the decision to indicate that the condition was considered enforceable.
21. Furthermore, while the appellant has suggested that the self-build element of the proposal be secured by condition, no specific wording has been provided. In view of this, and the absence of any other mechanism, such as a legal agreement, I cannot be satisfied that the dwelling would be properly secured as a self-build dwelling. As such, while I acknowledge that the self-build element of the proposal is a potential benefit, because no mechanism has been provided to secure this, it will not carry any weight. Even if the self-build element of the proposal had been secured, this would not have altered my overall conclusion given the harms identified.
22. Compliance with the development in relation to road safety, ecology, biodiversity and landscaping are expectations for all development that would weigh neither for nor against the proposal and is therefore considered neutral.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

23. I have found that the location of the appeal site is not suitable for the proposed development. The proposal would also cause harm to the character of the site and the surrounding area. The totality of these harms would be significant and bring the proposal into conflict with the development plan as a whole. The benefits of the scheme collectively attract moderate weight. However, they are insufficient, in this case, to outweigh the harms identified. As a result, the proposal would conflict with Policy SP4 of the TWLP.
24. In conclusion, the proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and material considerations, including the stated benefits and the Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

U P Han

INSPECTOR

² Ref. APP/C3240/W/24/3344946.