



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2025

by Bhupinder Thandi BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C3240/W/25/3366950

Land adjacent Sketts Barn, Walton, Telford, Shropshire

- 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 John Leech against the decision of Telford and Wrekin Council.
 - The application Ref is TWC/2024/0802.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 2no. self-build dwellings and associated access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have taken the site address and the description of development from the Council's decision notice. It simply and adequately describes both.
3. Outline planning permission is sought with access to be considered at this stage with all other matters reserved for future consideration. I have determined the appeal on this basis. An illustrative layout accompanies the application and I have paid regard to this layout in so far as assessing the principle of development in land use terms.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - Whether the site is an appropriate location for new housing having regard to the development strategy; and
 - Highway safety

Reasons

Appropriate location

5. Walton is small characterised by sporadic built form sitting within an agrarian landscape. The appeal site is a barn and associated land positioned on the western side of the B5063 and whilst there are buildings to the north and south it is understood as forming part of the rural landscape.
6. Whilst Policy HO10 of the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan (2018) (LP) supports limited infilling in named settlements including High Ercall where it would meet a local housing need Walton is clearly distinct from High Ercall being visually and physically separated by open agricultural fields. The site is not located within an identified settlement but rather located within a rural area. In such areas new

housing will only be permitted in certain circumstances and the proposal has not been presented on an essential need for a countryside location.

7. I acknowledge the presence of a footpath that sits inside the hedge leading from High Ercall towards Walton. However, the footpath is formed of grass, uneven in places and devoid of lighting and terminates to the south of the old airfield meaning users would have to continue their journey by walking along an unlit rural lane making walking between the site and High Ercall undesirable and impractical. This would be especially difficult for the young, the elderly and those with mobility issues and particularly so during the hours of darkness and inclement weather.
8. Despite the findings of the Rural Settlements Technical Paper High Ercall has a limited range of day-to-day services and facilities which would not be easily accessible by walking. Consequently, residents would be reliant upon larger settlements including Shrewsbury and Telford for the weekly shop, larger order goods, health, employment, higher education and entertainment.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to the presence of bus stops close to the site which provide services to Newport and Wellington. However, given the infrequent nature of the bus service it is likely that future occupants would still be heavily reliant on private car to travel for work or leisure. Consequently, the accessibility to services and facilities would be poor. This combination of factors demonstrates that the appeal site is not in a location where new dwellings would be considered acceptable having regard to the accessibility to services and facilities.
10. Address conventions are not an indicator of the site being within High Ercall, as the postcode and town is determined by Royal Mail to assist in the delivery of mail. This is distinct from nor reflects the spatial strategy outlined in the development plan. As such, I give this aspect of the appellant's argument negligible weight in coming to my decision.
11. As I have found that the site would not be located within an identified settlement whether the proposal constitutes in fill development is not a determinative factor for me in coming to my decision.
12. I conclude that the proposed development would not be an appropriate location for housing having regard to the area's development strategy contrary to LP Policies SP3, SP4, HO10 and HO11 which, amongst other things, seek to direct new housing development to appropriate locations.

Highway safety

13. The appeal site lies on the western side of B5063 which is subject to a 30mph speed limit with 'SLOW' markings on the road and signage. The road is on a north south axis and is relatively straight to the south of the proposed vehicular access whilst to the north is a sharp bend after a short straight.
14. The appellant's speed survey undertaken by a suitably qualified professional over a seven day period indicates that the average 85%ile traffic speed passing the site was 25.3mph for traffic travelling north and 25.6mph travelling south from the bend towards High Ercall and notably below the prevailing speed limit of the road.
15. Whilst noting the Council's comments I am confident that the monitoring strip was appropriately placed on the highway providing a robust and accurate assessment

of the speed of vehicles travelling along the road. The road is relatively straight to the south of the access and drivers exiting the site would have adequate visibility down the road. On account of the sharp bend to the north vehicle speeds in the vicinity of the site are likely to be low, as evidenced by the speed survey, as drivers decelerate into the bend when approaching from both directions. Taking into consideration the alignment of the road and low speed of traffic along this part of the B5063 there is unlikely to be conflict between vehicles leaving the site and oncoming traffic.

16. Furthermore, at the time of my site visit on a weekday morning the road was lightly trafficked, and vehicles appeared to be travelling at relatively low speeds. Whilst I acknowledge that this is a snapshot in time there was no obvious sign of highway safety issues. Taking the above into account I am satisfied that based on the prevailing road conditions it has been adequately demonstrated that suitable visibility in both directions and a point of access can be achieved.
17. I conclude that the proposed development would not adversely affect highway safety and accords with parts i, ii and iii of LP Policy C4 and parts ii and iv of Policy BE1 which, amongst other things, require proposals to be safe and convenient with regard to access, roads and layouts.

Other Matters

18. The Officer's report alleges that the area's appearance would be harmed through the loss of the traditional boundary treatment along the roadside. However, this is a matter reserved for future consideration and there is nothing to suggest that a sympathetic boundary could not be achieved at a later stage, if I were minded to allow the appeal.
19. The proposed development would not encroach into open countryside, nor would it be isolated, and there is no reason to suggest that an appropriate scale, design and layout could not be secured at reserved matters stage that respects the surrounding context and neighbouring occupiers. However, these matters do not overcome my concerns in respect of the appeal.
20. Whilst the appellant contends that no sites are coming forward and there is limited opportunity for infill development this is not justification for a scheme that I have found to be unacceptable in terms of its location.
21. I note the appellant has commented that the development plan policies are out of date as they pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). However, paragraph 232 of the Framework sets out that existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of the Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with the Framework. In the context of the development plan, I find Policies SP3, SP4, HO10 and HO11 of the LP to be broadly consistent with the aims of the Framework and as such they are not considered to be out-of-date for the purposes of this appeal.

Planning Balance

22. Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

23. The proposed development would make a small contribution to the area's housing need. However, given the Council are meeting its responsibilities in terms of overall housing supply I afford this moderate weight in the overall balance.
24. The proposal would provide a limited amount of short-term employment during construction of the houses, and it may well help to maintain services and facilities locally including the bus service. Whilst these are benefits, they would be modest.
25. The proposal would result in Council tax payments. However, these payments would essentially mitigate the impact of the proposed development.
26. I acknowledge that the proposed development has been advanced as self-build. However, as there is no legal agreement or planning obligation ensuring that the dwellings are carried out as such, I give this negligible weight in coming to my decision.
27. On the other hand, I have found that the site is not a suitable location for new housing with regard to the area's development strategy. Even taking into account the objective to significantly boost the supply of housing including in rural areas and effective use of land the conflict between the proposal and the most important policies in the development plan should be given very significant weight in this appeal. In the context of the above, and taking into account the aforementioned other considerations, I find that the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the identified benefits of the proposal, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not deliver a sustainable form of development.
28. Planning law requires that applications for planning permission should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In this instance the conflict with the development plan is not outweighed by other considerations.

Conclusion

29. For the reasons set out above the appeal does not succeed.

B Thandi

INSPECTOR