
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 June 2025

by **J McEvoy CEng MICE CMILT FIHE MIEnvSc**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 October 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/W1850/W/25/3364646

Land North of Lane End, Ledgemoor, Woebly, Herefordshire, HR4 8RN

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Garnstone Farms against the decision of Herefordshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 240693.
 - The development proposed is the Residential Development of Land North of Lane End, Ledgemoor for 3 dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the header is taken from the appellants appeal form. It is slightly different to that on the planning application form, but it more accurately describes the location of the proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues to be considered are:
 - whether the proposal is in a suitable location for housing, considering the local development strategy; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether the proposal is in a suitable location for housing

4. The Herefordshire Local Plan Core Strategy's (LPCS) Policy RA2 details the spatial strategy for rural areas, supporting housing development in or near settlements including Ledgemoor.
5. My site visit confirmed that the appeal site is not situated on the edge of Ledgemoor; I have both driven and walked the route between the two locations. For planning purposes, the appeal site is within the countryside as it is located some distance southeast of Ledgemoor. The LPCS Policy RA3 provides a list of development types that would be acceptable in Herefordshire's countryside. The development proposed does not meet any of these criteria, and conflicts with the Council's spatial strategy.

6. The settlement area of Ledgemoor located along Ledgemoor Road is a short to moderate walk from the appeal site, although this involves using an unlit single-track road with no pavement. I have safety concerns for pedestrians using an unlit, narrow, single-track road without a pavement, particularly in poor weather or at night. The walked route between the appeal site and Ledgemoor Road is therefore not likely to be an attractive option for pedestrians.
7. Ledgemoor is a small settlement with few community facilities; there is only a church and a club room for community meetings. There is no bus service to Ledgemoor. Residents of the proposed development would have to rely on private cars to travel to the village of Weobley or to Leominster for essential amenities such as a doctor's surgery, supermarkets, schools, and employment.
8. Whilst I observed several existing dwellings dotted along the no-through lane serving the appeal site and noted that the appeal site itself is positioned between two properties, all these properties face similar road infrastructure constraints gaining access to essential amenities.
9. In the interests of encouraging sustainable road travel, I acknowledge that the development proposed could be made capable of supporting recharging points for electric vehicles. That said, it is not possible to mandate the use of electric vehicle through planning conditions. I also acknowledge that proposal would provide office accommodation to enable working from home, though of course access to essential amenities would still be needed.
10. Given the policies in the Herefordshire development plan, and taking account of the access to services, I conclude that the proposal is not in a suitable location.
11. The proposal would conflict with LPCS policies RA2, RA3, SS1, SS4, SS6, and MT1, as well as Policy PG3 of the Pyons Group Neighbourhood Development Plan (the PGNP). Broadly, these policies promote sustainable development by guiding development to suitable locations and encouraging the use of sustainable transport.

The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area

12. The appeal site's rural location is characterised by its openness and tranquillity. The appeal site's immediate surroundings are greenfield and feature low-density housing. The site is situated near the end of a no-through unclassified road which provides access to several other dwellings. The dwellings are of varying size and design and spread out along the lane in a non-uniform pattern and includes the Marshpools Bed and Breakfast.
13. The appeal site presents as an irregularly shaped, approximately half-hectare plot of open, flat grassland, offering a visible green space between two dwellings. The site's character is enhanced by its surrounding mature hedging, which creates a sheltered atmosphere.
14. The proposed development would involve the construction of three detached dwellings on the site set back from the no-through road. The proposed dwellings would be of varying design, size, construction materials and orientation. The construction of the homes would be a mix of elevation layouts and materials, including facing brickwork, natural stone, and grey timber weather board. The proposed dwellings would also have a comparable height to the properties either

side of the appeal site. Red brick and natural stone have been used to construct other buildings along the no-through road while the proposed properties would benefit from the natural aesthetic of the grey timber cladding.

15. Overall, the proposed block plan layout shows a linear uniform row of development which would look out of place within the rural surroundings. I observed that the existing dwellings on the no-through road and in the main part of Ledgemoor are more spread out, with the properties separated by gaps, that is not reflected in the current proposal.
16. The development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would conflict with LPCS Policies SS6, LD1 and SD1 which, amongst other aspects, seeks to ensure that proposals would fit in with the overall form and layout of the surrounding development.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

17. It is reported that the 5-year housing supply is 3.06 years, as of January 2025 (Herefordshire Council, Five Year Housing Land Supply 2024-2029). This means the test set out in paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is engaged.
18. Regarding the beneficial impacts, the proposal would make a small though positive contribution towards housing supply. There would be environmental benefits in the form of additional tree and hedgerow planting, the use of solar panels and air source heat pumps, and energy efficiency in building design.
19. The proposal would also provide social and economic benefits associated with the construction and subsequent occupation of the proposed three dwellings, its potential to support local businesses, the rural economy, and the social well-being of the countryside.
20. I have considered Paragraph 61 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to significantly boost the supply of homes. I have also considered Paragraph 73 of the Framework, which recognises the important contribution of small sites in meeting the housing requirement of the area. Considering the scope of the proposal, I give these benefits moderate weight.
21. Given limited access to public services, and a reliance on private vehicle use, there would be adverse environmental and social impacts, which goes against aspects of the Framework. I have given this matter significant weight. The Framework notes that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character. I give moderate weight to the harm that would arise to the rural character of the area.
22. In terms of the Framework, and having regard to Policy SS1 of the LPCS, the inability of the local authority to demonstrate a five-year housing land supply triggers the "tilted balance". This means the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies, and permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
23. In view of my above findings, when assessed against the policies in the Framework, I find that the adverse impacts of the proposed development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. This leads me to conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J McEvoy

INSPECTOR