
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 November 2015

by Mark Caine BSc (Hons) MTPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 14 April 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/15/3130668

Land to the South of Sheinton Road, Cressage, Shrewsbury, Shropshire

- 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 A Morgan against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 14/05580/OUT, dated 12 December 2014, was refused by notice dated 17 February 2015.
 - The development proposed is two detached dwellings with associated garaging.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. No site address details were provided within the original application form. Nonetheless, the Council's decision notice and the appellant's grounds of appeal both refer to it as "Land to the South of Sheinton Road, Cressage, Shrewsbury, Shropshire". In making the appeal the appellant has also accepted this as the site address and I have therefore used it in the banner heading above.
3. The application was submitted in outline, with only access to be determined at this stage. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on this basis, treating the layout plan as indicative.
4. Since the submission of the appeal the Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (the SAMDev) was formally adopted on 17 December 2015. Following this change to the development plan, the parties were invited to submit additional representations on the adopted SAMDev and I have taken their responses into account in the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the proposal would represent a sustainable form of development.

Reasons

6. The appeal relates to a relatively flat grassed area of open paddock land that is accessed via a metal field gate. It is aligned by a mixture of hedges and a post and rail fence.
7. Although the appellant argues that Cressage is a settlement that was identified for residential development in the Shropshire and Atcham Local Plan 2001 (LP) it is

- uncontested that the appeal site lies to the east and outside of its development boundary. The villages of Cressage and Sheinton are also not identified as Community Hubs or Cluster settlements in the SAMDev.
8. Whilst the appeal site is located in between two properties, and there are seven dwellings in the locality, these comprise a scattered pattern of development in an area which has an overall character that is dominated by spacious gardens, open fields and agricultural land. Indeed, the degree of separation between these properties, and the built up envelope of the village is significantly further from what I regard to be the outskirts of Cressage or to constitute a built up frontage. As such I consider the appeal site to be situated in the countryside.
 9. In such areas the construction of open market dwellings is not permitted by Policy CS5 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy 2011 (CS). The objective of Policy CS5 is to strictly control new development in the countryside. New dwellings to house agricultural, forestry or other essential workers are an exception to this strict control. This policy is in broad accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which advises at paragraph 55 that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances. The proposal does not fall within any of the exceptions set out in Policy CS5 of the CS or any of the special circumstances set out in the Framework. The scheme therefore conflicts with both local and national planning policy in this respect.
 10. In arguing that the proposal is sustainable development the appellant has put to me that it would be within walking distance of the main core of the village, its facilities, and public transport links to an array of services in Shrewsbury and Bridgnorth. However the appellant accepts that two of the three bus stops are a 10 minute walk away from the appeal site and that they only operate on an hourly service. I also saw on my site visit that access to these, and other facilities would involve utilising narrow unlit rural roads which in the vicinity of the appeal site have no pavement. As such I do not consider that this would be suitable as a regular or adequate alternative to the use of a private car, to access the majority of the services in the area and further afield, particularly after dark and in bad weather. This would encourage unsustainable forms of travel and fail to support the move to a low carbon economy or actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling; two of the core principles set out at paragraph 17 of the Framework.
 11. Although it is common ground that the Council now has a demonstrable five year housing land supply, there is still a need to boost housing provision in Shropshire and I appreciate the contribution, albeit modest, that the proposal would make in this regard, and towards the objective of rural rebalance. A CIL payment would also be made towards infrastructure. However given the scale of the proposed housing it would be unlikely to contribute significantly towards supporting the services of other nearby villages and the local economy. I also appreciate that the appellant's family would be able to return to the area that they grew up, however personal circumstances seldom outweigh more general planning considerations, particularly where development would be permanent.
 12. It is acknowledged that the appeal site has no heritage, cultural or ecological designation and that the majority of the boundary hedgerow would be retained. I am also aware of the number of suggested eco-credentials associated with the proposed dwellings. Nonetheless, the full details of these are not before me, and I

have not been provided with anything substantive to indicate that these could not equally well be attained at another site not within the countryside. Furthermore, the design and style of the proposed dwellings would be required to be considered at the reserved matters stage.

13. Taking all of the matters above into account, whilst the appeal proposal would fit some of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, any benefits in these respects would be somewhat limited. Its location is such that it would be likely to foster growth in the need for private and unsustainable travel and be unlikely to provide significant support for thriving rural communities in the countryside.
14. Consequently, based upon the three-stranded definition and the balance of economic, social and environmental impacts, the proposal would not be sustainable development for which there is a presumption in favour. In these respects, I consider that the proposal would represent isolated homes in the terms envisaged by paragraph 55 of the Framework. In line with the terms of that paragraph, such development should be avoided.
15. I therefore conclude that the proposal would not represent a sustainable form of development. As such it would conflict with the aims of CS Policies CS5 and CS17 and the objectives in paragraphs 17 and 55 of the Framework. Amongst other matters, these seek to control development in the countryside and promote sustainable development.

Other matters

16. My attention has been drawn to a recent planning application for a single residential dwelling that was granted outline planning permission on the south side of Shrewsbury Road, Cressage (14/01895/OUT) and an appeal decision (APP/L3245/W/15/3029727) for five pairs of semi-detached dwellings on land adjacent to Ash Grove, Wem. Both of these cases refer to residential development outside of development boundaries. However the planning application report for the proposal on Shrewsbury Road states that the site is on the outskirts of the village of Cressage, and is supported by a pavement extension. The appeal decision letter recognised that windfall development on both brownfield and sustainable greenfield sites are important in order to meet the CS housing requirement. Nonetheless, the Ash Grove scheme is for a larger scale development than the appeal proposal, and I note that the previous Inspector concluded that it would not be isolated from the neighbouring development or town as there would be an almost continuous line of development between the appeal site and the centre of Wem. Accordingly the circumstances in these cases are not directly comparable to those which apply in the appeal. I have, in any case, determined the appeal on its own merits.
17. The appellant is also dissatisfied with the Council in regards to delays in the submission of appeal documents. However, I confirm that in this respect, I have only had regard to the planning merits of the appeal proposal that is before me.
18. For the reasons given above, the appeal is therefore dismissed.

Mark Caine

INSPECTOR