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# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2015

**by Mr A Thickett BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI DipRSA**

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

**Decision date: 24 March 2015**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/A/14/2225648**

**Land opposite Mill House, Corvedale Road, Halford, Craven Arms, Shropshire, SY7 9BT**

- 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 Norton Estates against the decision of Shropshire Council.
  - The application Ref 13/01633/OUT, dated 29 April 2013, was refused by notice dated 20 June 2014.
  - The development proposed is residential development. The appeal application is in outline with all matters bar access reserved for subsequent approval.
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## Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

## Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area and the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).

## Reasons

3. The appeal site lies to the east and outside the designated settlement boundary of Craven Arms. It is roughly rectangular in shape and includes parts of two fields and a small collection of run down buildings opposite a group of 5 houses known as Halford Meadow. Its long northern boundary is formed by Corvedale Road (B4368), the west abuts the River Onny and the south and eastern boundaries are unmarked. Around 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the site lies within the Shropshire Hills AONB (eastern end).
4. Travelling down the B4368 from the east one passes through the beautiful rolling open countryside of the AONB. Seen from the east, Craven Arms nestles comfortably within this landscape and is naturally confined by the River Onny. Despite the substantial dwellings at Halford Meadow, one does not truly feel that one is entering Craven Arms until one crosses the bridge over the river. In my view, Halford Meadow is physically and visually separate from the town and the River Onny forms a strong and clear boundary between the town and the open countryside to the east.
5. The open approach to Craven Arms contributes to its setting and is integral to the special landscape of the AONB. The proposed dwellings, which would not be hidden by the existing trees, would significantly undermine this open aspect

and the attractive setting of the town. Whilst the proposed houses would, in some views, be seen against the backdrop of the town they would still be obviously separate from it and appear as an incongruous freestanding group. The proposed houses would be opposite Halford Meadow but, in my view, this does not justify permitting a larger development outside the confines of the town. I agree that the abattoir, which is on the western side of the river, does not present the most welcoming face to visitors but it would still be visible as one crosses the bridge into the town.

6. For the above reasons, I consider that the proposal would have an adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area and the AONB. I conclude, therefore, that the proposed development conflicts with Policies CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy 2011.

#### Other matters

7. Norton Camp Iron Age hill fort lies about 900m to the south east of the site. This scheduled ancient monument includes the earthwork and buried remains of Norton Camp '*a large, approximately 7ha, D shaped multi-valliate hillfort<sup>1</sup>*'. Although it is set within dense woodland, as stated by English Heritage, the hill fort enjoys a commanding position above the Onny valley. I also agree with English Heritage that the '*application site is outside the main envelope of the town and has a clear visual relationship with the Norton Camp hillfort*'. The introduction of the proposed built development would interrupt views across the fields to the hill fort and have an adverse impact on the setting of this scheduled ancient monument.
8. I am aware that this is not a reason for refusal but I have a duty to have regard to the impact of development on designated historic assets. My findings in this regard add weight to my conclusion that the appeal should be dismissed.

#### Conclusions

9. The site is not proposed to be allocated for housing in the Council's Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development plan. That plan is currently being examined and I agree that it can be afforded only limited weight. The Council's contention that it can demonstrate that it has a 5 year housing supply is disputed. However, even if the Council is wrong and The Core Strategy's policies relating to the provision of housing are, as a consequence, out of date, I do not consider that the lack of a 5 year supply outweighs the harm I identify.
10. For the reasons given above and having regard to all the matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Anthony Thickett*

Inspector

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<sup>1</sup> English Heritage letter to the Council, 22 August 2013.