



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 December 2020 by A J Sutton BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

by Louise Nurser BA Hons Dip UP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/20/3258676

Upper Bromdon Farm, Wheathill, WV16 6QT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Parker against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00288/FUL, dated 17 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 28 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Demolish existing outbuilding and erection of a two-storey detached residential unit.'
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The appeal property is in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Council concluded the scheme would be reflective of development found in Bromdon. As such the development would not harm the landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB. I observed nothing on the site visit to dispute this conclusion.
4. Therefore, the main issue is whether the proposed development would be a suitable site for a dwelling in a community cluster.

Reasons for Recommendation

5. The appeal site is a plot of land which appears to form part of the grounds of Upper Bromdon Farm. It is adjacent to the lane, with a pond and open countryside beyond at its northern boundary and is situated at the access to the property. Four further dwellings are situated close by to the west and south of the farmhouse with three barns situated on the opposite side of the lane. The surrounding area is predominately countryside, with scattered farmsteads, sporadic small groups of buildings and a couple of caravan parks comprising the few built forms in this rural setting.
6. Community Clusters and Community Hubs are identified in the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan 2015 (SAMDev)

- which also includes bespoke policies which guide development within individual clusters and hubs. Both parties agree that the appeal site is within the Silvington, Bromdon, Loughton and Wheatmill Community Cluster. In respect to this Cluster Policy S6.2(iv) of the (SAMDev) states that limited infill of smaller, market priced houses on single plots immediately adjacent to existing development, and conversions on suitable sites may be acceptable, with housing guidelines of around 12 additional dwellings over the period to 2026.
7. The quantum of development would be consistent with the policy and based on the evidence before me there would be no conflict in this respect with the housing guidelines applicable to the Cluster.
 8. The proposed development would not seek to convert the existing building but would comprise the demolition of the existing structure and would replace it with a modestly proportioned three-bedroom detached market dwelling.
 9. The Council confirms that there is no defined settlement boundary around Bromdon and the term '*Infill*' has not been defined in the explanatory text of the policy. However, infill is generally understood to be the filling of a gap between existing built development. Indeed, the Concise Oxford Dictionary defines it as the placing of buildings to occupy the space between existing ones. There is nothing before me which suggests I should take a different approach to this accepted definition.
 10. The appeal site appears within the curtilage of the Upper Bromdon Farmstead and is viewed in that historic context alongside other outbuildings, and as part of the wider small settlement which includes nearby dwellings. Whilst there are structures to the east and south, when observed from the road it forms the edge of the settlement with no built form to the north. Therefore, although the development would be close to existing development and would not encroach into the countryside, it would not fill a gap between the existing development and therefore would not constitute infill in this respect.
 11. It is therefore concluded that the proposed development would not be a suitable site for a dwelling in a community cluster and would be contrary to the detailed provisions of Policy S6.2(iv) of the SAMDev and would be inconsistent with rural housing policies of the National Planning Policy Framework.
 12. The principle of the proposal may accord with the distribution of and requirements for housing as set out in Policies CS4 and CS5 of the Shropshire Local Development Adopted Core Strategy 2011 (Core Strategy) and Policies MD1 and MD3 of the SAMDev, However, with regards to the details of the proposal, I have found it would conflict with the policy which guides development at this particular location for the reasons outlined.
 13. There is no dispute regarding the proposed design in this case and as such the development would accord with Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy and Policy MD2 of the SAMDev in this respect. However, this matter alone would not outweigh the conflict identified.

Other Matters

14. The Bromlow¹ decision relates to a site which falls within a different Community Cluster some distance from the appeal site where the pattern of development is

¹ Planning Permission Ref 19/02225/OUT

distinctly different and where proposals are subject to different policy considerations.² Therefore, it is not directly comparable, and I attach limited weight to this matter in this case. In any case, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.

15. The extant planning permission³ for the garage had not been implemented at the time of conducting the site visit but I see nothing which would lead me to conclude approved works would not be carried out. Regardless of which, this consent would not alter the pattern of development at the appeal site and is therefore not determinative in this case.
16. The Council has confirmed that it is in exceedance of its five year housing land supply and I have no compelling evidence before me that would challenge this assertion.
17. Whilst any benefit is to be welcomed in these challenging times, this alone should not be a justification to approve development which would conflict with development plan policies. Benefits to the rural economy which would arise from this development would be limited given its proposed magnitude. The effective use of previously develop land and contributions to the housing mix would also be limited benefits for this reason. Such small benefits would not outweigh the conflict with local plan policies identified above.
18. It should be expected that development would not give rise to unacceptable impacts on ecology or the landscape and therefore these matters are neutral factors in this case.

Conclusion and Recommendation

19. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A J Sutton

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

20. I have considered all the submitted evidence and concur that the appeal should be dismissed.

Louise Nurser

INSPECTOR

² Policy S2.2(vii) of the SAMDev

³ Planning Permission Ref 20/00286/FUL