



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2021

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15th June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/21/3267145

Corely, Hazler Rd, Church Stretton, SY6 7AQ

- 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 David Wright against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02537/OUT, dated 26 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as "*erection of two new detached dwellings and creation of wider access from highway*".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr David Wright against Shropshire Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Preliminary Matter

3. The application is in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration except for the means of access. Drawings showing an indicative layout have been submitted, and I have had regard to these in determining this appeal.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are whether the development, firstly, would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Church Stretton Conservation Area and, secondly, would prejudice highway safety.

Reasons

Conservation area

5. The appeal site is within the Church Stretton Conservation Area, which encompasses the historic core of the town and residential areas that extend up the valley sides. Its significance stems from its large number of well-preserved buildings and spaces that reflect the historic development of the area as a traditional market town and later as an inland resort.
6. The appeal site is located in a residential area that is characterised by larger detached properties, many of which date to the Edwardian period. These properties are mostly set within generous plots that contain mature trees and

dense boundary planting. This forms part of a wider swath of green infrastructure along the southern edge of the conservation area that contributes significantly to its pleasant verdant character.

7. The appeal site consists of part of the gardens to Corley and Longcroft, which are detached dwellings on the southern side of Hazler Road. These properties sit within spacious plots that contain a significant number of mature trees, and extensive planting. Whilst many of the trees are tall conifers that have limited individual value, they form part of the wider swath of planting along the edge of the conservation area. They have significant group value in this regard.
8. The development would necessitate the removal of a number of mature trees within the site, both to facilitate the proposed access and to accommodate the new dwellings. This would significantly reduce the site's contribution to the pleasant green edge of the conservation area, and their removal would be apparent from a number of public vantage points. Moreover, there would be only limited space available to accommodate replacement tree planting within the site. In this regard, the planting of larger trees along the proposed access route would dominate both the retained garden areas to Corley and Longcroft, and the frontages to the new properties. This would be likely to result in pressure for their removal due to overshadowing and proximity issues. In addition, a new tree is indicated next to the proposed access point, which could obstruct visibility. Based on the information before me, it is unclear whether adequate replacement planting is capable, in principle, of being accommodated as part of the development. This would significantly harm the site's contribution to the setting to the conservation area.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would fail to preserve the character and appearance of the Church Stretton Conservation Area. This harm would be 'less than substantial' in the context of Paragraphs 195-196 of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework'). However, the limited social and economic benefits associated with the provision of 2 new dwellings would not outweigh the harm in this case.
10. The development would therefore be contrary to Policies CS6 and CS17 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011), Policies MD2, MD12, and MD13 of the Shropshire Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (2015), and guidance in the Framework relating to designated heritage assets.

Highway safety

11. Hazler Road is a narrow single-track route, with a significant gradient along it. The properties in this location are generally positioned on higher ground above road level and have mature planting along their frontages.
12. The development proposes the widening of the existing access to Longcroft, which would serve Corely, Longcroft, and the 2 proposed dwellings. However, little detail has been provided regarding the visibility splays from the proposed access point. Moreover, it is unclear whether appropriate visibility can be achieved given the change in levels, and the presence of mature vegetation along the roadside. Whilst I note that the existing accesses to Corely and Longcroft currently have restricted visibility, the development would significantly increase the number vehicles using this access. Given these constraints and uncertainties, I do not consider that this matter can be dealt with by condition. Whilst it is asserted that the proposed visibility splays

accord with the Highways Authority's standards, that has not been demonstrated in the submitted details.

13. In the absence of further information, I conclude that the development would be likely to prejudice highway safety. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CS6 of the Shropshire Core Strategy (2011), which seeks to ensure that all development is designed to be safe. It would also be at odds with the Framework, which requires development to be served by a safe and suitable access.

Other Matters

14. Two existing properties (Fir View and The Gables) back onto the appeal site to the north west. Fir View has a relatively small garden area and rear-facing windows that appear to serve bedrooms. In this regard, the submitted plans show the side elevation of a proposed dwelling in relatively close proximity to this property. However, layout and scale are reserved matters and so the submitted layout is illustrative only and subject to change. In my view, the site is large enough to accommodate 2 dwellings without significantly harming the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
15. Separately, there would be a significant separation distance between the proposed dwellings and properties fronting onto The Bridleways. This would ensure that no significant loss of privacy would arise. However, that does not alter my other concerns regarding the development, as set out above.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR