



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 24 August 2021

by Samuel Watson BA(Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/21/3273622

Rear of Acton Arms, Morville, Bridgenorth, WV16 4RJ

- 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 James Collins against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref 20/03647/OUT, dated 22 September 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is outline permission for the development of 3 homes in the paddock to the rear of the Acton Arms, Morville.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal before me has been made in outline with appearance and landscaping reserved for a subsequent application.
3. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 20 July 2021. I have determined this appeal in the context of the revised Framework, on which the parties have been given the opportunity to comment.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is whether the location of development is suitable, with regard to sustainable development and access to services and facilities.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is within a small parcel of land to the rear of the Acton Arms, a currently vacant public house within the village of Morville. The village is considered to be suitable for a limited amount of residential development within the Council's development plan, with Policy S3.2 (iii) of the Shropshire Council Sites Allocations and Management of Development Plan (SAMDev, adopted 2015) considering around 15 new dwellings being appropriate. It is clear that, so far over the plan period, 28 properties have been built or currently have extant permission within the village. No evidence has been provided to suggest that the extant permissions would not be built out, therefore the proposal would result in this number being further increased to 31 properties.
6. The appellant has drawn my attention to a previous permission on site which was permitted for six dwellings (Reference: 15/00304/FUL). This permission has now expired, but the appellant considers there to have been no material

changes to the situation on the ground or policy and therefore that the principle of development is still established.

7. While I note that a new Framework has been published, I find that there have not been any material changes within local or national policy relevant to this appeal. However, it is clear from the evidence before me that, at the time of the previous permission, the number of new permitted dwellings (whether with outline or full permission) would have also exceeded 15 dwellings. However, it appears that this over provision would have been less than that before me. Therefore, while both developments would bring the number of new dwellings constructed beyond the 15 set out in the development plan, I find that the increase in built out, and extant, permissions since the now expired permission to be a material change in circumstances. I therefore find that it is necessary to reconsider the principle of development.
8. Whilst I note the Council found the proposal would provide a social benefit by increasing the number of residents in the village, I am not convinced the proposal would result in any meaningful economic uplift, and the evidence before me is limited in this regard. Specifically, whilst the Acton Arms may be renovated as a result of this scheme, and the Appellant has put forward a unilateral undertaking to ensure this, I am not convinced that the three dwellings would be sufficient to ensure the long-term viability of the public house. Moreover, whilst I have been directed to a school and village hall within Morville, I find it unlikely that future occupiers could provide long term economic benefits for the village through the use of these facilities alone. As such there would be only a limited economic uplift as a result of the modest construction works.
9. Given the location of the development and the limited services and facilities within Morville, it is likely that future occupiers would need to travel further afield to meet their daily needs. Whilst a bus route to larger settlements has been brought to my attention, it is not clear where this stops or whether its schedule would be suitable for commuting, to employment or education, or for regular shopping trips. As such I find that future occupiers would be reliant on a private motor vehicle to meet these needs.
10. Whilst Morville is considered to be somewhat sustainable, this is only for a limited number of dwellings. Although the limit of 15 new dwellings is not a hard cap, the total of 31 new dwellings resulting from this development would be significantly higher than intended by the scope of this soft limit. While the soft limit may have already been breached this does not justify in itself exacerbating this breach further, and no other justification has been provided.
11. As the proposal would result in additional dwellings over and above the limit set out within Policy S3.2(iii) of the SAMDev, it would not comply with the aims of the Council's locational strategy in directing development towards more sustainable locations. It would therefore conflict with Policy CS4 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and Policies MD1, MD3 and S3.2(iii) of the SAMDev. Amongst other matters these policies collectively require new residential development to be sustainable and commensurate with the size of the settlement, mindful of the housing number guidelines also set out in the policy. The development would also conflict with the overarching aims for sustainability set out within the Framework.

Conclusion

12. The government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of housing and the proposal would provide three new dwellings. The scheme would also lead to a small and time-limited economic benefit during the construction phase, as well as some social benefits resulting from future occupiers. Given the small scale of the proposal, and the supply of extant and completed permissions within Morville over the plan period, these benefits attract moderate weight.
13. Conversely, the location of the proposal in an area which has already surpassed the level of residential development considered acceptable would undermine the Council's plan-led approach to the delivery of housing. This matter attracts significant weight and outweighs the benefits associated with the proposed development.
14. The proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR