



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 April 2025

by H Whitfield BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/24/3357858

46 Coldridge Drive, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY1 3YT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Ian Mottershaw against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01205/FUL.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling (C3).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address on the decision notice differs from that on the application form. There is no evidence that the appellant agreed to the change in address. I have therefore used the address from the application form in the banner heading above.
3. The Council has ticked that part of the site is subject to a Tree Preservation Order on its questionnaire. However, the Officer Report confirms that the mature Oak tree was removed in 2022 with the agreement of the Council¹, subject to the planting of a replacement tree in the first planting season following its removal. I did not observe any trees on the appeal site during my site visit.
4. The Council's Statement of Case refers to the examination of the draft Shropshire Local Plan (2016-2038) which took place in October 2024. I have not been supplied with a copy of the draft Local Plan. However, the Council has summarised the concerns raised by the Examining Inspectors, and I am advised that the Council's intention is to withdraw the Plan from examination. Whilst I am unaware of whether the formal withdrawal of the plan has taken place at the time of writing, the Council's submissions do not rely on any policies of this draft Plan and no such policies are before me. I have therefore based my decision on the current adopted Development Plan.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site relates to a broadly rectangular piece of land to the rear of a parking court off Coldridge Drive which is part of the wider Herongate estate. The land lies to the south-west of 46 Coldridge Drive (No 46) and has been enclosed by a close

¹ LPA Reference: 22/01896/TPO

boarded fence. Residential properties abound the site on three sides and a footpath lies to the east which connects Coldridge Drive to Farmlodge Lane, which affords public views towards the appeal site. Properties to the south of the site off Farmlodge Lane are typically larger two-storey detached dwellings. However, properties on Coldridge Drive in the vicinity of the appeal site are predominately two-storey, short, terraced blocks or semi-detached dwellings with narrow frontages and varied garden sizes. These are occasionally interspersed with one and a half storey terraced blocks which typically feature gable fronted dormer windows cut into the eaves and cat-slide roofs to the rear.

7. There is a general regularity to the pattern of surrounding development. Properties are typically set back behind small front gardens or parking spaces on a broadly uniform alignment, albeit with staggered façades and varying ridge heights. Moreover, there is a general consistency of material palette and architectural detailing in the street scene where the terraces have narrow projecting gables, decorative timber porch canopies and chimneys. Overall, despite some variation, the area has a relatively uniform character and cohesive appearance, and this is clearly perceptible upon visiting the site, despite an absence of any character appraisal of the area having been undertaken by the Council.
8. In contrast, the appeal scheme proposes a one and a half storey, wide gable fronted detached dwelling with a steep pitched roof. The dwelling would be set back considerably from the adjacent terrace containing No 46, positioned to the rear of the parking court. Whilst the footprint of the dwelling and provision of a smaller house-type would not be uncharacteristic, the one and a half storey design with a wide gable frontage and steep pitched roof would directly contrast with surrounding development. The design of the dwelling also fails to incorporate architectural features that are characteristic of other properties in the street scene, as outlined above. The positioning of the dwelling at the rear of the parking court would also fail to respond to the surrounding pattern of development. This, coupled with the contrasting design, would result in an alien and incongruous form of development that would be an obvious anomaly, detracting from the quality of the area.
9. I note the appeal site is not publicly accessible and given the dwelling would be tucked behind No 46 which is at the bottom of the turning head, it would not be highly prominent in views to vehicles travelling along the road. However, the development would be clearly open to view by cars using the parking court and pedestrians using the footpath to the east which links Coldridge Drive with surrounding streets. Moreover, whilst there may be a greater variety of development and examples similar to the appeal scheme in the wider estate (which has incrementally developed over time), or within the town more generally, this is not reflective of the character of development immediately surrounding the site and the context within which this new dwelling would be viewed.
10. The appellant suggests that provision of a 2-bed dwelling with a smaller amenity space and at a lower price range would reflect the character of properties on Coldridge Drive. Whilst this may be the case, this does not overcome the harm I have identified as a result of the uncharacteristic design, form and positioning of the development. Nor does the assertion that the design has sought to preserve the living conditions of neighbouring properties. In addition, the absence of an adopted design guide for residential development or a character appraisal of the estate, weighs neither for, nor against, the scheme.

11. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, it would conflict with Policy CS6 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (2011) (the Core Strategy) and Policy MD2 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (2015) (SAMDev Plan), insofar as they seek to secure high quality design that respects and enhances local distinctiveness, and development that takes account of the character and appearance of the surrounding area and responds appropriately to its surrounding context. The development is also contrary to paragraphs 131 and 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where they seek to secure high quality design that is sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

12. Reference has been made to the dwelling being affordable and for local people to rent, which the appellant states is in high demand. However, there is no substantive evidence before me to demonstrate this demand and how the proposed dwelling would align with the local housing need. Furthermore, there is no mechanism before me that would secure the dwelling for only local people to rent.
13. The dwelling would incorporate renewable energy technologies, sustainable building materials and construction techniques and would be designed to comply with building regulations in respect of accessibility. However, there is little in the evidence to suggest the development would be particularly innovative, or that it would go beyond the requirements of the development plan or other governing legislation in this regard and therefore these benefits are given limited weight in favour of the proposal. Furthermore, the availability of utility services connecting to the site is a neutral factor.
14. I note the appellant states the site has no viable alternative use and the development would improve the site's current untidy appearance. However, I am not persuaded that there would not be a less harmful way of repurposing the land and securing the same benefits.
15. I also note the appellant's concerns over the Council's handling of the application and how it has conducted its overall planning balance. However, this has no bearing on my consideration of this appeal and I have determined the case on its planning merits.

Planning Balance

16. The Council concedes that it cannot currently demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The evidence indicates that the current supply is 4.73 years, which is a modest shortfall. Nonetheless, in this circumstance, paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is engaged. The evidence does not indicate that paragraph 11(d)(i) applies to the proposal. Therefore, I shall consider the proposal against the test in paragraph 11(d)(ii).
17. The development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to the aforementioned policies of the Core Strategy and SAMDev Plan, to which I attach significant weight. This is sufficient to bring the development into conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. Development that conflicts with the development plan should normally be refused unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

18. The development would provide a dwelling in an established residential area of Shrewsbury, reasonably close to services and facilities and would make efficient use of underutilised land. As a 2-bed dwelling on a smaller plot, the development could also cater for those seeking smaller units of accommodation. The development would therefore make a small but beneficial contribution to the choice of homes in the area and the supply of housing land; as well as providing social and economic benefits during construction and after occupation. Additional landscaping, including the planting of an Oak tree, would also provide minor biodiversity benefits. Housing delivery is supported by the Framework and, therefore, this benefit weighs in favour of the proposal. However, the contribution that would be made by a single dwelling would be modest and, therefore, the weight attached to these benefits is limited.
19. Overall, whilst there is a shortfall in the five-year housing land supply, in the specific circumstances of this case, the adverse impact of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development when assessed against the policies of the Framework, when taken as a whole. Therefore, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

20. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

H Whitfield

INSPECTOR