
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2025

by Hannah Guest BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/25/3365531

Land adjacent to 11 Corfton Bache, Craven Arms, Shropshire SY7 9LE

- 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 David Dickinson against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/04151/FUL.
 - The development proposed is 3 bed house for a single disabled occupancy, access drive and parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. I have used the address given on the appeal form and added “land adjacent to’ in the banner heading above, as this more accurately describes the location of the proposed development.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including whether it would conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape; and
 - whether the appeal site would be an appropriate location for the proposal with regards to the Council’s spatial strategy for the area, including its accessibility to services and facilities.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is located adjacent to the appellant’s house, close to other houses along Corfton Bache, not far from the small village of Corfton. Corfton Bache is a narrow single-track road lined with hedges, trees and other vegetation. Given this it has a very rural, green and verdant character.
5. The houses along Corfton Bache are positioned close to the highway. The ground level of the houses in relation to the road varies. with some elevated above the road, some sited below and others set at a similar height. The houses are two-storey and most have at least part of the first floor within the roof space. They are quite modest in size and have fairly simple forms. They are largely finished in

natural materials, such as stone or lime render around a timber frame. The house opposite the appeal site has a small amount of timber cladding.

6. The proposed dwelling would be set further back from the road than the other houses along Corfton Bache. While it would have a simple form, at 2 full storeys in height with a very shallow, almost flat roof, its scale and massing would not be in keeping with the other houses. In addition, the large expanse of timber cladding proposed, although a natural material, together with the proposed metal roof and recessed metal framed windows would create a more contemporary appearance. For these reasons, the proposal would appear at odds with the character and appearance of the nearby houses.
7. Notwithstanding this, the position of the proposed dwelling, set back from and above the road, means it would not be readily apparent from Corfton Bache due to intervening landscape. It would however be visible from the site entrance. In these views, although the proposed dwelling would not be obtrusive, it would appear incongruous given its set back from the road and the difference in its scale, massing and external materials. The proposal would therefore result in a small degree of harm to the character and appearance of Corfton Bache.
8. The proposed dwelling would be more noticeable in short distance views from some of the houses on the B4368 in Corfton, particularly from the rear windows and gardens of The Hamptons and Sunnyside Farm. Views from public vantage points on the B4368 would be more limited. It would also likely be evident in medium distance views from Hill House Farm, which sits in an elevated position on the other side of Corfton. Nonetheless, in these short and medium distance views, the proposed dwelling would appear behind the existing trees bordering the appeal site and, together with its timber clad finish, this would help soften its appearance and blend it into its surroundings. Furthermore, there are some larger, more modern dwellings along the B4368 within Corfton, including The Hamptons, so the scale, massing and appearance of the proposed dwelling would not be as out of place when seen in this wider context.
9. Given the undulating and partly wooded landscape, it is not clear from the evidence before me, how visible the proposed dwelling would be in long distance views from the wider countryside to the south-east. Nonetheless, in these long-distance views the proposed dwelling would likely blend even more into the surrounding landscape and would appear similar to many buildings and houses set into the wooded landscape within the wider area.
10. I appreciate that the proposal would encroach into the countryside and erode the openness of the appeal site. This would urbanise the rural landscape to a degree. However, I am of the view that the proposed dwelling could be successfully integrated with its surroundings. While its positioning would be slightly at odds with the houses along Corfton Bache, it would not be dissimilar to the dispersed arrangement of development in Lower Corfton. Given this, the effect of the proposal on the character of the wider countryside would be limited and not to the extent that it would result in any appreciable harm.
11. The appeal site is within Wenlock Edge, a wooded limestone escarpment forming part of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape (National Landscape). The Shropshire Hills AONB Management Plan 2019-24 (2019) identifies this area of the National Landscape as the most settled part, where development pressures

are highest. A priority for this area is to retain character and limit the negative impacts of change and development. Nevertheless, the development pressures referred to appear to be focused more on the nearby town of Church Stretton.

12. I have found that the proposal would maintain the character of the countryside. The proposed dwelling is a modest form of development, which would be positioned behind the largely tree-lined boundaries of the appeal site and would appear set within the trees. The proposal would not involve the removal of any large mature trees, and the boundaries of the site could be strengthened with additional planting, as part of an appropriate and comprehensive landscaping scheme secured by condition. For these reasons, the proposal would not harm the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape.
13. Overall, the proposal would result in modest and localised harm to the character and appearance of Corfton Bache. Accordingly, it would conflict with Policy CS6 of the Shropshire Local Development Plan Adopted Core Strategy (2011) (Core Strategy) and Policy MD2 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (2015) (SAMDev). These seek to ensure that development will be designed to a high quality, which respects and enhances local distinctiveness, by being an appropriate scale, density, pattern and design, taking into account local context and character.
14. Notwithstanding this, the proposal would not harm the character of the wider landscape or the landscape and scenic beauty of the National Landscape. It would therefore accord with Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy, which seeks to ensure development identifies, protects, enhances, expands and connects Shropshire's environment assets by contributing to local distinctiveness, having regard to the quality of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape.

Spatial strategy

15. Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy sets out the strategic approach for growth in Shropshire. It states that, in rural areas, development and investment will be located predominantly in community hubs and community clusters and will contribute to social and economic vitality. Outside these settlements, development will primarily be for economic diversification and to meet the needs of the local communities for affordable housing.
16. This approach is supported by Policy MD1 of the SAMDev, which specifically supports sustainable development in Shrewsbury, the Market Towns and Key Centres, and the Community Hubs and Community Cluster settlements identified in Schedule MD1.1.
17. Corfton Bache runs from the B4368 within Corfton to the north. It is a no-through rural lane that provides access to several houses, including the appellant's current residence and the appeal site. While the appeal site is not far from the edge of Corfton, it is separated by an open field and appears detached both in plan and on the ground. I am therefore of the view that, for the purposes of the Council's strategic approach the appeal site would be located in the open countryside. Notwithstanding this, given its proximity to Corfton and the other houses along Corfton Bache, the proposal would not result in the development of an isolated home in the countryside.

18. In terms of new development in the countryside, Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy permits development proposals on appropriate sites which maintain and enhance countryside vitality and character and where they improve the sustainability of rural communities by bringing local economic and community benefits. The policy provides examples of certain types of development that it particularly relates to. However, it does not explicitly restrict market housing in the open countryside.
19. I have found that the proposal would maintain the character of the countryside. I also note that the proposed dwelling is intended to provide independent living for a member of the appellant's family who is disabled and has been designed to meet the family member's very specific needs. There would be tangible benefits to both the appellant and their family member from living close to one another.
20. Nevertheless, there is nothing before me to demonstrate how the proposed dwelling would be secured for the benefit of the appellant and their family member. While it may be possible to impose a condition restricting the occupancy of the proposed dwelling, I am mindful that the Planning Practice Guidance advises that planning permission usually runs with the land, and it is rarely appropriate to provide otherwise. It would be unreasonable to require the demolition of a dwelling that is intended to be permanent. The proposed dwelling would therefore likely remain, even after the personal circumstances of the appellant's family member cease to be material, and future occupancy of the proposed dwelling would be unlikely to entail a similar situation. Given this, it would be unreasonable to impose such a personal occupancy condition in this case.
21. The proposal's contribution to the sustainability of the rural communities would be very limited, as would any economic and community benefits arising from it. There is no dispute between the parties that the proposed dwelling would have limited accessibility to services and facilities. Future occupants would therefore be heavily reliant on private vehicles. Overall, the proposal would not enhance the vitality of the countryside or broader social and economic well-being of the rural communities to any appreciable degree.
22. The appellant refers to three previous grants of permission for single dwellings on other sites close by, including a recent full permission for an open market dwelling approximately 120 metres from the appeal site. However, while I do not have the full details of these permitted developments before me, unlike the appeal proposal, they were located within Corfton, which as a Community Cluster settlement the Council considers to be a suitable location for limited open market housing. Given this, I can only afford these permitted developments limited weight in my decision. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.
23. Accordingly, for the reasons above, the proposal would conflict with Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Core Strategy and Policies MD1 and MD7a of the SAMDev. The appeal site would not be a suitable location for the proposal when applying the Council's spatial strategy set out in the development plan. The proposal would be in a less sustainable part of Shropshire in terms of accessibility and would not maintain or enhance the sustainability of the countryside or the broader social and economic well-being of the rural communities. The conflict with the Council's spatial strategy would also harm the public interest of having a genuinely plan-led system that provides consistency and direction.

Other Matters

24. In terms of benefits, the proposal would provide an additional open market, self-build, energy efficient dwelling. The Council does not currently have a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The latest land supply position was 4.68 years. Although this shortfall is reasonably modest, the Council's emerging local plan has been at examination for some time, and there is nothing before me to suggest that the shortfall will be addressed any time soon. The additional dwelling would therefore make a meaningful contribution to the Council's housing supply. As a single dwelling with limited accessibility, overall, I afford it moderate weight.
25. The proposal would also provide some modest economic and social benefits arising from the spending associated with its construction and subsequent occupation.
26. I have carefully considered the documents submitted¹ to support the proposal in terms of it delivering housing for a disabled person. I acknowledge the personal circumstances of the appellant's family member, and I sympathise with the on-going daily challenges that arise as a result. While I would afford these personal circumstances significant and decisive weight in favour of the appeal, there is no mechanism before me to restrict the occupancy of the proposed dwelling. As an open market dwelling any planning permission would run with the proposed dwelling and therefore the house could be occupied by others, now and in the future, who do not have the same needs. The weight I can afford to these personal circumstances in my decision is therefore limited.
27. I have had due regard to Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination and promote equality for those who have disabilities, as well as Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, as incorporated by the Human Rights Act 1998, and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
28. Dismissing the appeal would not render the appellant's family member homeless. They would continue to live independently in their current home and community. I can appreciate the benefits arising from the family member living close to the appellant. However, from the evidence before me there is nothing to suggest that their current home is not suitable or accessible to them. Although the appellant refers to the family member's current housing as sub-optimal, the evidence suggests that this is due to its location and not the standard of the housing itself. Furthermore, although the proposal may provide the optimal solution for the appellant, there is no substantive evidence before me that it is the only means of meeting the needs of the appellant's family member and securing their rights.
29. Having regard to legitimate and well-established planning policy aims to direct development to the most sustainable locations, in this case I consider that greater weight should be attached to the public interest. Dismissal of the appeal is therefore necessary and proportionate, and it would not result in a violation of the human rights of the appellant.

¹ Shropshire Council Draft Independent Living & Specialist Accommodation Strategy, Housing and Disabled People: Britain's Hidden Crisis, Equality and Human Rights Commission (2018), House of Commons: Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee – Disabled people in the housing sector (May 2014).

Planning Balance

30. Whether or not the development plan is out-of-date in respect of self-build housing, given the shortfall in housing supply, paragraph 11d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) falls to be considered. Permission should therefore be granted unless any adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
31. I have found that the proposal would conflict with the Council's spatial strategy. It would not be well located in relation to accessing day-to-day services and facilities by more sustainable forms of transport and would not enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities or the countryside. I therefore afford significant weight to the conflict with Policies CS1 and CS5 of the Core Strategy.
32. The appellant refers to an application for a single detached dwelling in a neighbouring authority that was allowed on appeal². In this case, the Inspector afforded only limited harm to the conflict with the Council's spatial strategy. This was partly because, given the modest scale of the proposal, the Inspector afforded only limited weight to the harm arising from the development generating an unsustainable overreliance on the private motor car. Nonetheless, unlike the appeal proposal, the permitted development, in this case, was considered to be located within a small service village and, as such, in line with Paragraph 73 of the Framework, the Inspector afforded great weight to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. This would not be the case for the appeal proposal.
33. The Council's strategic approach to development is broadly consistent with the Framework in terms of supporting housing development in rural areas that reflect local needs. Like the Framework, Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy promotes housing in rural areas where it would enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities.
34. I understand that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas and this should be taken into account in both plan-making and decision-making. However, Paragraph 117 of the Framework, seeks to ensure that applications for development give priority first to pedestrian and cycle movements; and second – so far as possible – to facilitating access to high quality public transport with, among other things, appropriate facilities that encourage public transport use. The proposal's limited accessibility to day-to-day services and facilities in terms of walking and cycling would mean that it would conflict with these aims of the Framework.
35. The proposal would also result in some modest and localised harm to the character and appearance of the area. Policy CS6 of the Core Strategy is broadly consistent with the Framework in terms of ensuring that development is sympathetic to local character. The Framework considers good design to be a key aspect of sustainable development and advises that development that is not well designed should be refused.

² Appeal Reference: APP/C3430/W/21/3283085

36. The appellant refers to the Framework's aim to provide housing for different groups in the community, including people with disabilities. Nevertheless, without a mechanism to restrict the occupancy of the proposed dwelling, the proposal would not fulfil these aims.
37. Overall, I find that the significant adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its moderate benefits. Thus, in this case, material considerations do not justify allowing the appeal.

Conclusion

38. For the reasons above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole and all relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Hannah Guest

INSPECTOR