



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2025

by **H Smith BSc (Hons) MSc MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L3245/W/24/3355634

Land on the south side of Manor Court, Uffington, Shrewsbury SY4 4SN

- 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 W Maguire against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01015/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of one detached dwelling and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) was published in December 2024 after the Council made its decision. I have had regard to the revised Framework in reaching my decision.
3. The appellant submitted a unilateral undertaking during the appeal. I shall return to this matter below.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:
 - whether the site is a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to local and national policy,
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area,
 - whether the proposal would preserve the setting of nearby heritage assets,
 - the effect of the proposal on highway and pedestrian safety, and
 - whether it has been demonstrated that the proposal would secure the provision of an off-site affordable housing contribution.

Reasons

Suitability of location

5. The appeal site comprises part of a large open field on the edge of Uffington, a linear village set within attractive open countryside. The site's undeveloped and open nature plays a key role in reinforcing the visual and spatial transition from the built form of the village to the surrounding countryside. While Uffington does not

benefit from a formally defined settlement boundary, the existing buildings form a coherent and recognisable linear pattern, which clearly delineates the extent of the settlement. This pattern is readily identifiable on the ground and provides a logical basis for distinguishing between the developed area and the wider rural surroundings. In light of this, and having regard to the site's physical characteristics and its relationship with the existing built form, I consider the appeal site to fall within the countryside for the purposes of planning policy.

6. Policy CS1 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (2011) (Core Strategy) outlines the strategic approach to development across the County. The strategy includes seeking to ensure that rural areas will become more sustainable through a rural rebalance approach, which includes accommodating around 35% of the area's residential development in rural areas over the plan period. Such development will be located predominantly in Community Hubs and Community Clusters. Policy MD1 of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (2015) (SAMDev) describes how growth is to be managed sustainably, with Shrewsbury, the Market Towns and Key Centres, and the Community Hubs and Community Cluster settlements identified as the main focus for development. Uffington is identified as a Community Cluster Settlement.
7. In order to provide for sustainable patterns of development Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy strictly controls development in the countryside. It provides a list of particular development that it relates to including dwellings for essential countryside workers and conversions of rural buildings. There is no evidence before me to suggest that the proposal falls within any of the development listed in Policy CS5.
8. Policy MD7a of the SAMDev includes strict control against market housing development in areas defined as countryside. Policy MD3 of the SAMDev recognises that windfall residential development, including on sites within the countryside, will play an important part in meeting Shropshire's housing needs. However, Policy MD3 requires proposals to comply with other relevant development plan policies, such as CS5 of the Core Strategy, and MD1 and MD7a of the SAMDev. The proposal would be for an open market dwelling in the open countryside and therefore would fail to satisfy these policies.
9. Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy outlines the approach to meeting the housing needs of the area to create mixed, balanced, and inclusive communities, which includes consideration of the type, tenure, and affordability of housing development. The proposed development does not constitute any of the development types outlined in Policy CS11.
10. I note that both parties agree the appeal site is not isolated, given its proximity to existing dwellings. I am satisfied therefore that the site does not constitute an isolated location in the context of paragraph 84 of the Framework, which sets out that new isolated homes should be avoided in the countryside.
11. However, the site's lack of isolation under paragraph 84 of the Framework does not imply that it would be reasonably accessible to services and facilities when assessed against the broader sustainability requirements of the Framework.
12. During my site visit, I observed that Uffington offers a limited range of services and facilities, including a pub/hotel, village hall, and a church. As such, future residents of the proposed development would likely need to travel to neighbouring

settlements on a regular basis to access a wide range of shops, services, and potential employment opportunities.

13. I am informed that public bus services operate in the area, with a bus stop located approximately 150m from the site. A pavement runs through the village, and I note that the appellant has proposed to extend the pavement to the site. However, I have not been provided with a bus timetable and therefore cannot confirm whether the available routes and timings would meet the typical daily needs of future occupiers. Additionally, the absence of street lighting in the vicinity of the appeal site and beyond the built-up edge of the village would render the roads unsuitable for walking or cycling during hours of darkness. While there are Public Rights of Way and cycle routes nearby, these are unlit and unlikely to be suitable for all users, particularly during darker hours or inclement weather.
14. The appellant suggests that there are employment opportunities within commuting distance of the appeal site, including at Upton Magna Business Park, Haughmond Quarry, Rea Valley Tractors, and numerous employers nearby in Shrewsbury. However, access to these from the appeal site is likely to be by car due to the nature of the unlit routes and lack of public footpaths.
15. Consequently, future occupiers would be reliant on private vehicles to access essential services and facilities, and employment opportunities, even if such journeys are relatively short. In this countryside location, the site is not sustainably located in terms of access to services and facilities, with limited opportunities for alternative modes of sustainable transport.
16. Although the Framework acknowledges that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, based on the findings above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the Framework in this regard.
17. Accordingly, the appeal site would not be a suitable location for the proposed development, having regard to the Council's housing strategy. As such, it would conflict with Policies CS1, CS5 and CS11 of the Core Strategy, and Policies MD1, MD3 and MD7a of the SAMDev.

Character and appearance

18. The appeal site comprises a grassy field enclosed by a mix of fencing and mature vegetation. It adjoins existing residential development to the north, while open fields extend to the south and west. To the east, the site is bounded by a road, beyond which lie further fields and Bridge Farm with its associated livery yard, forming part of a dispersed pattern of development within the countryside. The site's undeveloped nature makes a positive contribution to the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area.
19. Approaching Uffington from the south, the transition from open countryside to the built-up area is gradual, characterised by modest, low-level buildings. The appeal site plays an important role in maintaining this transition and holds intrinsic countryside value that enhances the character and appearance of the locality.
20. The proposal seeks to introduce a substantial two-storey detached dwelling, together with a garage/pool building and a detached stable block. This would create a development of considerable scale and an extensive building footprint,

significantly larger than nearby buildings. Its bulk and height would make it a prominent feature in the landscape.

21. Although some boundary vegetation provides partial screening, the development would remain clearly visible from the road and from elevated ground to the east, including sensitive viewpoints on Haughmond Hill. It would appear intrusive and would erode the site's undeveloped character. The large, tall dwelling would also be conspicuous along the approach to the village from the south when passing the site. Combined with the proposed access arrangements and vehicle parking, the scheme would have a significant and harmful impact on the rural landscape's character and appearance.
22. While the proposal would be positioned close to the buildings of Bridge Farm, these are modest structures that are neither unexpected nor visually intrusive within the rural setting. By contrast, the proposed dwelling and associated buildings would introduce an urbanising influence that would diminish the site's rural qualities.
23. The appeal site currently forms part of a field with a typical rural appearance, which complements the area's overall quality. There is no substantial evidence to suggest it could not continue to serve a beneficial purpose as grazing or agricultural land.
24. The appellant contends that the proposal's design represents a modern interpretation of a traditional farmstead. However, the proposed materials, such as zinc roofing and extensive glazing, would appear unsympathetic and out of keeping with the traditional buildings nearby, including those at Bridge Farm. Consequently, the proposal would fail to respond positively to the local character or reflect the design of surrounding development.
25. Domestic features likely to accompany the development, such as garden furniture, would further erode the rural character of the site and its setting. Additionally, the introduction of fencing and hardstanding for the courtyard entrance and parking area would reduce the site's current open, grassy appearance.
26. I recognise that the visual impact of the proposal might be softened to a degree by additional tree planting/landscaping. However, such planting would take many years to become fully established and could not effectively mask the scale and bulk of the proposed buildings. Moreover, the long-term survival and maintenance of such planting cannot be guaranteed.
27. For the reasons given, the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies CS6, CS17 of the Core Strategy, and Policies MD2, MD12, and MD13 of the SAMDev. Collectively, these policies seek to ensure that development achieves high quality design which protects the countryside, respects local distinctiveness and valued landscape character.

Heritage Assets

28. The appeal site is located within the setting of the Scheduled Monuments of Uffington Roman Temporary Camp, Haughmond Hill hillfort, and Queen Eleanor's Bower. Scheduled monuments are designated heritage assets. They are, by definition, of national importance.
29. Uffington Roman Temporary Camp is likely to date from mid to late 1st century AD. The monument includes the buried remains of a Roman temporary camp which are

visible as cropmarks. The camp is situated on a low-lying sand and gravel terrace within a bend of the River Severn on its east bank, just south of the village of Uffington. The camp is scheduled due to its rarity, survival and documentary evidence of the heritage asset, the strong historical and spatial group value with other Roman remains at Wroxeter and throughout Shropshire and into Wales, and the clear evidence of reuse that distinguishes the camp from similar sites and increases its archaeological potential. The appellant's submitted Heritage Assessment, dated January 2024, highlights the importance of the current setting of the camp, which includes the River Severn and the flatness and openness of the floodplain.

30. The hillfort is situated on the summit of Haughmond Hill, at the western end of the escarpment, from where there are extensive views over the Severn valley and the north Shropshire plain. Indeed, the appellant's Heritage Assessment indicates that the generally extensive unbroken views over the rural landscape make a major contribution to its significance.
31. The scheduled monument known as Queen Eleanor's Bower includes the earthwork and buried remains of a ringwork situated on a knoll near the base of the south western side of Haughmond Hill. From this location there are extensive views of the Severn valley, including the medieval urban centre of Shrewsbury to the south west.
32. The proposed development would add considerable bulk and mass to the appeal site. Due to the topography, the hillfort on the summit of Haughmond Hill and the Queen Eleanor's Bower would be on higher land than the appeal site. The appellant's submitted Key View Analysis, dated February 2024, shows that the appeal site is visible from Haughmond Hill, and clear views of the site from the hill were attainable at the time of my site visit. Whilst public views of the proposal from the scheduled monuments would be diminished during the summer months when leaves would be on surrounding trees and hedgerows, there would be a significant period of time throughout the year when the proposed development, due to its height and scale would be visibly conspicuous. It would be an intrusive and disruptive element that would not be read as part of the existing built form of the village, resulting in harm to the setting of these two designated heritage assets.
33. However, given the distance between the appeal site and the Uffington Roman Temporary Camp, the flatness of the land and the intervening road and mature vegetation, I am satisfied that the setting of this heritage asset would be preserved and the contribution it makes to the asset's significance would not be harmed.
34. Consequently, the proposal would fail to preserve the settings of the hillfort at Haughmond Hill, and the Queen Eleanor's Bower scheduled monuments. As such, it would harm the significance of these heritage assets. Paragraph 212 of the Framework advises that when considering the impact of development on the significance of designated heritage assets, great weight should be given to their conservation. Given the scale and substance of the proposal, I find the harm to the heritage assets to be less than substantial, at the medium level, but nonetheless of considerable importance and weight. Under such circumstances, paragraph 215 of the Framework advises that this harm should be weighed against public benefits of the proposal.

35. The proposal would contribute towards the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of housing by providing one large family dwelling, meeting the needs of present and future generations. Economic benefits would be delivered through the construction phase, including the creation of jobs and supporting builders and building suppliers. The scheme would also generate direct and indirect social and economic benefits, including local spending by future occupiers, use of local services and facilities and support to local businesses, which would help to enhance or maintain the vitality of rural communities. Financial benefits would also arise, including possible CIL contributions, and a financial contribution towards off-site affordable housing. There would also be environmental benefits from energy efficiency and reduced emissions by using methods such as ground source heating, solar panels, and rainwater harvesting.
36. The proposed pedestrian footpath would be used by the future occupiers of the proposed dwelling and potentially by existing occupiers at Bridge Farm. I therefore recognise that it would provide some public benefit, albeit limited.
37. Weighing the public benefits as a whole, I attribute moderate weight to them. However, they do not outweigh the considerable importance and weight I attach to the harm identified to the significance of the designated heritage assets.
38. I therefore conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the setting and significance of these designated heritage assets. As such, the proposal would conflict with Policies CS17 of the Core Strategy and Policy MD13 of the SAMDev. Collectively, these policies amongst other things, seek to protect and enhance heritage assets, including their settings. Also, the proposal would not accord with the policies of section 16 of the Framework which seek to conserve and enhance the historic environment.

Highway and Pedestrian Safety

39. The proposal would introduce a new access for the dwelling and a further new field access to the south of the site. The Council's Highway Officer initially raised concern about the scheme, which included in regard to the visibility splays of the proposed access points. However, the appellant submitted revised drawings which show that the full splay sought can be provided within the highway and frontage of the site, including the swept path for horsebox/trailer. As such, this could be met by the imposition of an appropriate planning condition.
40. The Highway Officer states that the proposed footway should be a minimum width of 2 metres and positioned directly adjoining the edge of the carriage with a highway verge to the rear adjoining the site boundary. Although the proposed footway as shown on the submitted plans is not of an adoptable standard/design, there would be enough space available at the appeal site to achieve this. As such, this could also be met by the imposition of an appropriate planning condition.
41. Given that the proposed development would be for one dwelling only, there would be a small number of daily vehicular movements into and out of the appeal site. I note that the appellant has confirmed that the proposed stables and grazing paddocks would be solely for private use. Accordingly, subject to appropriate conditions, I find that the proposed development would not be harmful to highway and pedestrian safety.

42. For the reasons given above, and in the absence of substantive evidence to the contrary, I find the proposal would not be harmful to highway and pedestrian safety. The proposal therefore accords with paragraph 116 of the Framework, which states that development should be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

The provision of an off-site affordable housing contribution

43. The Council indicates that, were the proposal to be granted planning permission, a financial contribution towards local affordable housing provision would need to be made. The appellant has submitted a satisfactory Section 106 unilateral undertaking, dated 14 November 2024, that addresses this issue. Therefore, the proposal, if granted permission, would secure the provision of an off-site affordable housing contribution. With regards to this main issue, I find no conflict with Policy CS11 of the Core Strategy and MD7 of the SAMDev. Although reasonable weight can be afforded to this benefit, it does not overcome the conflicts with the development plan identified above.

Other Matters

44. The application form indicates that the proposal would be a self-build home. However, there is no mechanism before me, such as a planning obligation, by which to secure a self-build property. Therefore, I cannot be sure that this intention would be carried out.
45. The Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply and therefore a presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. However, with reference to paragraph 11d) of the Framework, an exception is provided where policies in the Framework that protect assets of particular importance provide a strong reason for refusing the proposal. Footnote 7 establishes that this includes designated heritage assets; it still applies when an appeal site is within the setting of a designated heritage asset and harm has been found. I have found that the proposal would harm the setting of the nearby scheduled monuments. It would therefore not accord with policies of the Framework. Consequently, those policies provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.
46. My attention has been drawn to a previous appeal decision¹ at land adjacent to Nesscliffe Hotel. However, unlike the proposal before me, this previous permission was located close to the main hub of Nesscliffe, which included a public house, petrol station, convenience store, post office, and good availability of public transport.
47. Reference has been made to a previous appeal decision² at land to the south of Meole Brace retail park. However, the Inspector found that this site was bounded by transport infrastructure or development on all sides with a road running through it. The Inspector found that the site had a strong, physical relationship with the existing built development. This is markedly different to the proposal before me, which is not bounded on all sides by existing built development.
48. Attention has also been drawn to a previous appeal decision³ at land off Hinton Lane, Pontesbury. The Inspector found that this site was at the edge of the built-up

¹ APP/L3245/W/21/3288834

² APP/L3245/W/21/3267148

³ APP/L3245/W/23/3324882

area of Pontesbury and surrounded by a degree of development. It was a very short distance from the end of a shared driveway to where Pontesbury visually begins and from there a supermarket, medical centre, and other services could easily be accessed by foot or bike. This therefore had a close relationship to the settlement, and the future occupants would not be reliant on private motor vehicles to meet their needs.

49. As such, there are significant differences between these other appeal decisions and the appeal decision before me. In any event, I have determined this appeal decision on its own merits and its site-specific characteristics.
50. The appellant is willing to extend the 30mph speed limit zone but has no authority to do so, as the road is under third-party ownership.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

51. The proposal would provide benefits as outlined above. It would also provide a financial contribution towards local affordable housing provision. However, given the scale of the proposed development, these moderate benefits would not be sufficient to outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the countryside, nor the harm to the Council's development strategy. I have also found harm to the setting of the designated heritage assets for the reasons explained.
52. Whilst a lack of harm has been found in regard to highways and pedestrian safety, this would be neutral in any planning balance.
53. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole, and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

H Smith

INSPECTOR