



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 February 2026

by Samuel Watson BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 April 2026

Appeal Ref: 6002113

Land off Terrick Road, Whitchurch SY13 1TX

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Lloyd against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/02571/OUT.
 - The development proposed is outline application for residential development, with all matters reserved apart from access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The proposal before me has been made in outline with only the matter of access being considered at this stage. All other matters, namely appearance, landscaping, layout and scale, have been reserved for a subsequent application. I understand from the appellant's case that the submitted drawings, in these respects, are for illustrative purposes only, I have considered them as such.

Main Issues

3. The Council are no longer defending their reason for refusal related to protected species and therefore, the main issues are:
 - Whether the location of the appeal site is suitable for new residential development;
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, with particular regard to the historic environment; and,
 - The effect of the proposal on highway safety with particular regard to the proposed access.

Reasons

Location

4. The appeal site is located at the edge of Whitchurch and comprises a field accessed off Terick Road and sited behind development on Fairways Drive and Clayton Drive. The appeal site is outside of the settlement boundary for Whitchurch which is identified as a Market Town or Key Centre by Policy MD1 of the Site Allocations and Management of Development Plan (the SAMD).
5. The properties backing on to the appeal site form a clear and defined edge to the built environment. Beyond this edge the land is predominantly set aside to open

fields or, to the other side of the site, a golf course. Collectively this character does not contribute to the continuation of the settlement. As such, I find that while the appeal site adjoins the settlement, it is outside of Whitchurch and its settlement/development boundary.

6. The SAMD, under Policies MD1, MD3 and MD7a provides some limited support for residential development outside of Market Towns and Key Centres. In particular, support can be given for exception sites and conversions that meet local housing needs. In this case the proposal is for the erection of a mix of open-market and affordable housing. The proposal does not, therefore, comprise conversions or an exception site.
7. I am mindful that Whitchurch contains a wide range of services, facilities and both rail and bus routes. By way of their distance and the presence of footpaths these would be safely accessible by pedestrians and cyclists. Future occupiers would therefore be able to reach all of their typical needs within Whitchurch and without reliance upon private motor vehicles.
8. Nevertheless, on a plain reading of the above policies it is clear that the proposal still conflicts with the Council's spatial strategy for residential development. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies CS1, CS5, CS11 of the Shropshire Local Development Framework: Adopted Core Strategy (the ACS) and SAMD Policies MD1, MD3 and MD7a which collectively identify the Council's hierarchy for development and spatial strategy as set out above.

Character and Appearance

9. As noted above, the appeal site covers a field set behind existing residential development at the edge of Whitchurch. The site itself is a long and relatively rectangular area that slopes, across its length, away from Fairways Drive. The appeal site extends beyond Fairways Drive and directly adjoins a golf course. On a further two sides the site attaches to open fields. By way of being a field located at the edge of the settlement and adjoined by fields and other green spaces, the appeal site reads as part of, and contributes to, the wider countryside.
10. Near the appeal site is the Old Rectory a Grade II* listed building. Built around 1749 it sits within a moat and is associated with a Grade II listed Game Larder and the Grade II listed Coach House and Adjoining Forecourt Walls. The significance of these buildings come in part from their group value sited at edge of the settlement with clear connection to the countryside beyond.
11. I am mindful that the golf course and its boundary planting, which is on higher ground, creates something of a visual barrier in northerly views, including in those from the above heritage assets. Nevertheless, given their green nature they still suggest a continuation of the fields below the golf course into the wider countryside.
12. The proposal would project built development, in the form of new dwellings, a roadway and hardstanding, along with associated residential paraphernalia including cars, well beyond the existing built-up edge of Whitchurch. Some of this would be viewed within the envelope of development along Fairways Drive and Clayton Drive. However, given the appeal site extends well beyond these, the proposal would also be viewed against the open fields and the landscaped golf course. This would include from nearby roads, such as Tarporley Road, and the

public right of way adjacent to the appeal site. The proposal would therefore not round off or infill a gap in development but would instead protrude out into the open countryside and begin to cut off the surrounding fields from the wider countryside.

13. The appellant has suggested that planting around and through the site would be employed to soften its appearance and tie the development into the surrounding area. However, I cannot from the details before me, be certain that this would be effective. Moreover, any planting is likely to take some considerable time to grow in to an effective screen, and I note the appellant makes reference to 15 years in this regard.
14. In all, the proposal would substantially change the appearance and character of the appeal site by introducing a relatively significant degree of development. This change would in turn affect the contribution this site makes to the surrounding group of fields by reducing their visual connection to the wider countryside. I am mindful that this group have been identified as being somewhat eroded in their quality, but this does not justify their further erosion through the proposal before me.
15. I am mindful of the appellant's concerns as to the quality of the Council's appraisal but find no reason to question the suitability of the individual who carried out the assessment.
16. It was clear from my site observations that views of the above listed buildings were screened from the site by mature trees surrounding the moat. I understand that a treeline here is not historic and that it is likely that a visually open connection would have previously been present. Moreover, it is likely that views from the grounds of the Old Rectory would include the appeal site. Therefore, while the listed buildings are not readily visible from the appeal site, I nevertheless find that the site is within their setting.
17. The changes and harm identified above to the surrounding landscape would therefore adversely affect the setting of the above identified listed buildings. In particular as, the positioning of the Old Rectory, and its associated buildings, at the edge of the settlement would be lost through the enclosure of these fields. Against this background, I find that a low degree of less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset would occur. Although less than substantial, considerable importance and weight should be given to any asset's conservation. Paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) advises that this harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal.
18. In the case of this appeal the proposal would provide 42 new dwellings with good access to the services and facilities of Whitchurch. It would therefore contribute towards the Council's supply of housing, of which there is an undersupply, with additional social and economic benefits stemming from the construction works and future occupiers. The proposal would secure biodiversity gains and so ecological benefits would arise from this also. I am content that these matters would be public benefits and that, given the scale of the proposal, these benefits would attract significant weight. However, in the circumstances of this case, these public benefits do not outweigh the considerable importance and weight I attach to the preservation of the listed buildings set out above.

19. I note the potential for archaeology to be present at the appeal site and that the proposed development has the potential to affect this. However, I am content that such risk could be suitably minimised by way of a condition in the event that the appeal were to be allowed.
20. Nevertheless, in light of the above the proposal results in harm to the surrounding landscape and the significance of designated heritage assets. The proposal therefore conflicts with ACS Policies CS6 and CS17, and SAMD Policies MD2, MD12 and MD13. These policies collectively, and amongst other matters, require proposals be of a high quality that respects and enhances the local distinctiveness and context of the natural, built and historic environments. Particular concern is given to the protection and conservation of heritage assets and avoiding any harm or loss of significance. The proposal also conflicts with the Section 16 of the Framework, including Paragraphs 207 and 215, which sets out the importance of heritage assets and the aim to conserve them.

Highway Safety

21. The appeal site is served by an existing access onto Terrick Road. Upon turning on to the site, the access route travels between properties on Fairways Drive and Terrick Road. Terrick Road is served by a pavement which links via Alport Road into the centre of Whitchurch. I understand that the roads in the immediate surroundings are covered by 30mph speed limits.
22. Although the access is relatively constrained, it would be wide enough to provide a vehicular carriageway that allows for two-way traffic and a footpath for pedestrians. From the plans and submissions before me, it is clear that the carriageway would not meet the requirements of the Manual for Streets to accommodate two heavy goods vehicles passing. However, the access would only be serving a residential development and would not provide a through-route. I therefore consider that such an eventuality would be very unlikely.
23. I am content from my observations on site and the information before me that suitable visibility splays could be provided at the access in both directions. I am mindful that the appellant's swept path analysis for refuse vehicles shows that such a vehicle would need to enter the opposite carriageway in order to turn left into the site or left out of the site. However, this encroachment would occur only infrequently and would be time limited. As such, I find that it would not unacceptably affect highway safety. Similarly, given the nature and scale of the proposal, it would not so significantly increase the amount of traffic on the surrounding roads as to be detrimental to the safe and efficient flow of traffic along them.
24. As noted above, the proposal would provide a single footpath along this access route. I note that it would meet the width requirement of Manual for Streets and that it would connect directly onto the wider network. Although there is only a pavement proposed on one side of the access route, this appears typical for the surrounding area, and I am content it would accommodate the occupiers of the 42 proposed properties. Given the above the proposal would provide a safe route for pedestrians entering and exiting the site and there would also be no undue risk for cyclists using the access.
25. The submitted information would need supplementing in the event that the appeal were to be allowed. However, this could be secured through a condition.

Therefore, while the details before me are limited, they are sufficient to allow me to consider the proposal and be satisfied that an acceptable solution could be brought forward.

26. The proposal would therefore not unacceptably harm highway safety for pedestrians, cyclists or motorists on or around the appeal site. although the Council have referred to ACS Policy CS6 and SAMD Policy MD2 these do not appear to be particularly relevant to the matter of highway safety. Nevertheless, the proposal complies with Section 9 which, amongst other things, seeks to prevent proposals causing unacceptable highway safety impacts.

Conclusion

27. I note that both parties agree the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply. However, the Framework provides a clear reason for refusing the development, in the identified heritage harm, and therefore the proposal does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.
28. Nevertheless, the Government's objective is to significantly boost the supply of housing, and the proposal would provide 42 new dwellings in a location with good access to services and facilities. It would also lead to a small and time limited economic benefit during the construction phase, as well as social and economic benefits resulting from future occupiers. The provision of biodiversity net gain would additionally benefit ecology. Given the scale of the proposal these matters would at most attract substantial weight.
29. Whilst the proposal may not result in any harm to highway safety, this lack of harm is not a benefit in itself. I therefore attach this neutral weight in my consideration.
30. Conversely, the proposal would result in harm by way of conflicting with the Council's spatial strategy in conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. The proposal would also harm the character and appearance of the surrounding landscape and the significance of the identified designated heritage assets. This attracts very considerable weight and outweighs the benefits associated with the proposed development.
31. The proposal would therefore conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. Therefore, for the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Samuel Watson

INSPECTOR