
Appeal Decision

Site visit made 1 June 2026

by **B Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 June 2026

Appeal Ref: 6005834

Ryton Grange, Ryton, Dorrington SY5 7LW

- 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 & Mrs R & E Morris against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/03477/FUL.
 - The development proposed is Conversion of an agricultural building into 2-bedroom dwelling including alterations to existing access road and creation of new parking spaces.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised car parking plan has been submitted in support of the appeal, titled Parking and Access Plan (Revised). This plan shows three parking spaces to the east of the building, dedicated to the appeal building and a passing point close to the site's entrance. This differs from the originally submitted location plan that showed all parking areas associated with the two existing holiday-let units, and which included five spaces alongside the appeal building. Furthermore, a structural report has also been submitted with the appeal documents.
3. I have considered the additional information in consideration of the *Holborn Studios Ltd v The Council of the London Borough of Hackney [2017] EWHC 2823* judgement. The revised highway details and structural report provide further supporting information regarding the intended operation of the site, and suitability of the building's conversion, but do not amend the proposal. As such, I have considered whether accepting the information would cause procedural unfairness to interested parties. I note that the Council has seen and provided comment on the additional details.
4. As the additional details do not amend the proposed development from that seen within the application, this evidence does not make a substantive change to the proposal, and interested parties would have seen these details as part of the appeal notification process. As a result, I have accepted the new evidence as it would not unfairly deprive those entitled to be consulted on the application, the opportunity to make representations.

Main Issues

5. The main issues are:

- Whether the building is deemed suitable for conversion in consideration of local policies,
- Whether the proposed dwelling would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers, with particular respect to noise and disturbance and the provision of external space, and
- The effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

Suitability for conversion

6. The Shropshire Local Development Framework: Core Strategy (CS) [2011] establishes the Council's approach to the distribution of housing across the borough. CS policy CS5 includes support for the conversion of rural buildings which take account of, and make a positive contribution, to the character of the building and its surrounding countryside. This policy also states that open market residential conversions will only be supported where respect for the heritage asset and high standards of amenity is achieved.
7. Furthermore, policy MD7a of the Shropshire Council Site Allocations and Management Development (SAMDev) Plan [2015] provides requirements with respect to managing housing development in the countryside. This explains that new market housing will be strictly controlled outside of Shrewsbury, the Market Towns, Key Centres and Community Hubs and Community Clusters. It states that residential conversions will only be acceptable where the building is a design and form that is of merit for its heritage/landscape value, requires minimal alteration and would respect the significance of the heritage asset, its setting and the local landscape character.
8. Therefore, the key considerations of this issue are whether the building is regarded as a heritage asset, whether the scheme would respect the existing building with minimal alteration and whether it would support the heritage and landscape value of the site and its surroundings.

Heritage asset

9. The Council's 'Type and Affordability of Housing' SPD (TAH SPD) [2012] at paragraph 2.29 defines heritage assets as those that pre-date the 1950's, consist of traditional materials, are of permanent and substantial construction, and are of local significance and add value to the landscape. This is not a policy document but provides useful guidance as to the Council's identification as to what it regards as a heritage asset, providing certainty for applicant's in addressing CS policy CS5 and SAMDev policy MD7a.
10. The existing building is single storey and currently used as a store. It is largely of brick construction with a profile sheet roof. A breeze block lean-to runs along one side. The existing building is of functional design and has little architectural merit in itself. The appellant's Structural Report considers the suitability of the building for residential conversion, and it has found it to be in reasonable structural condition.
11. The building has barn doors at one end, two personal doors and several small windows and stands within a close-knit group of buildings. These include Ryton Grange Farmhouse, a Grade II listed building, and several large outbuildings that

have been previously converted to further residential use. The building is adjacent to the existing buildings within a village setting and is subservient to both the adjacent buildings and the local streetscene. The Council has explained that the building was built after 1954 and before 1972 based on historic mapping.

12. I note that a short statement has been provided by the appellant from the previous owner of the site. This suggests that the barn could pre-date 1950 and was in existence in 1954, but this evidence can only be afforded limited weight as it is not a statutory declaration. Therefore, whilst the building consists of traditional materials and is of substantial construction and represents the evolution of the farmstead, the most compelling evidence suggests that it was constructed after 1950, is of limited architectural or historic interest and is therefore not regarded as a heritage asset for policy purposes.

Respect the existing building/include minimal alteration

13. The Structural Report demonstrates that the building could be converted with relatively minimal alteration to its basic structure, retaining most of its structural elements and requiring only modest repair to some components. Nonetheless, the scheme would include substantial new wall openings along its long elevation consisting of several large, glazed panels. Furthermore, the existing doorways would be blocked up. Also, the proposal includes the addition of weatherboard cladding, a new veranda entrance, rooflights and high-level fencing. As such, and in contrast to the appellant's view, the altered building would not appear as a subordinate supporting agricultural structure to the main farmhouse or retain its simple form. Instead, it would become a building of heightened significance in the hierarchy of existing associated former farm buildings.
14. These alterations, taken together, represent the addition of non-traditional features and the removal of existing components that present a substantial change to the existing building's fabric and appearance. These works would, in combination, substantially alter the appearance of the building, adversely altering its currently subdued contribution to the grouping of traditional farm buildings. Whilst some materials could be altered and agreed by condition, such conditions could not adequately address the harmful extent of change proposed. Accordingly, the proposal would not respect the existing building and would include alterations that would not be regarded as minor.

The heritage and landscape value of the site and its surroundings

15. The grade II listed building of Ryton Grange Farmhouse originates from C17. It has a timber frame and brick walls, that have been largely concealed by pebbledash, and a plain tile roof. It has a range of interesting architectural features that reflect its significance, which derives from both its architectural and historic interest, being a traditional rural farmhouse.
16. The appeal building is set behind the farmhouse, alongside a larger two-storey outbuilding already converted to residential use. The proposal would be accessed via the shared track, but would not share the main courtyard, instead being served by an improved driveway and parking area at a point furthest from the listed building. Accordingly, the new activity associated with the proposal would be largely divorced from the listed building, thus preserving both the significance of the listed building and its curtilage listed buildings. Nonetheless, the local historic

context of the appeal site would require proposed development to be sensitive to this setting.

17. Due to its proximity to other farmstead buildings, the proposal would not respect its historic setting. The addition of contemporary alterations would substantially alter its appearance from a clearly subdued agrarian form to a more prominent domestic use. The proposed development would not therefore support the historic value of the site and its surroundings.
18. In the wider context, the building is hidden from public views due to topography and vegetative screening. It may be seen in some private views, but these would be filtered and distant, where the building is seen within the context of adjacent built form. The appeal site is within a cluster of buildings in the open countryside with distant views of fields used for arable purposes beyond the rear boundary of the site. As such, the proposed conversion would have a neutral effect on the site and surrounding area's landscape value.

Summary of the first main issue

19. Taking the above points together, the appeal building would be unsuitable for conversion in the form prescribed. The proposal would not make a positive contribution to the character of the building or its historic setting. Furthermore, the proposed alterations would result in a design that is not minimal or of merit in consideration of the site's heritage value. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with CS policy CS5, SAMDev policy MD7a and the Council's TAH SPD, whose requirements I have already set out above.

Living conditions

20. The Council identify that planning permission 16/01760/FUL, for a large agricultural building, has been approved close to the appeal building. The appellant's 'Response to Highways' note shows the location of the approved building and that it was approved in June 2016. This also shows a car park and an access occupying parts of the area of the appeal site and appeal barn. Furthermore, during my visit I saw no clear evidence that the development had lawfully commenced, and therefore this approval may well have expired unimplemented.
21. Although the Council declares that the approved scheme could yet be implemented, it has not demonstrated the full context of that approval or any conditions that would control its use even if built. The Council has also not presented a clear understanding of the potential conflict that would arise if these two schemes were to be implemented together. Therefore, the likelihood that the approved barn would cause demonstrable noise and disturbance to future occupiers of the proposal, even if both were in operation together, has not been demonstrated.
22. Furthermore, the Council identify the potential for noise and disturbance to be caused to the proposal from the existing holiday-let use to the south of the site. However, it is generally recognised that new residential uses within residential areas would be compatible with their surroundings. Furthermore, in this case, the proposed converted building would face away from the southern converted barn. This means that any noise, created between both units, would be unlikely to cause substantive levels of disturbance.

23. The appeal site, that is the area of land within the red-lined site, includes the access drive, the footprint of the building, car parking for 3 cars and a pocket of green space to the east of the site. As such, the external amenity space consists of a small parcel of land to the side of the car park. The appellant identifies that amenity space would be provided ahead of the terrace to the north of the building and would be private. However, this area is outside the redlined site plan and therefore cannot be considered as part of the proposed use. Whilst the appellant regards the external space to be clearly defined, the small green area within the site is small and fails to provide sufficient space for occupiers to use as meaningful outdoor space.
24. Accordingly, whilst the proposal would provide suitable living conditions for future occupiers with respect to noise and disturbance, it would provide limited and restricted external living space. Consequently, the proposal would conflict with CS policy CS6 and the TAH SPD. These require, among other matters, for development to safeguard residential amenity and create acceptable living standards for the provision of external private amenity space.

Highway safety

25. The proposed scheme intends to make use of an existing access onto the highway through the village. The access currently serves two buildings, used for holiday lets, and the appeal barn. A small courtyard is located adjacent to the two existing holiday lets and this includes a gated access onto the driveway and parking area in front of Ryton Grange Farmhouse.
26. The appellant's transport statement identifies that the proposal would attract minimal traffic and that the existing access has been in long term use without causing safety issues. Furthermore, the appellant asserts that the agricultural land associated with the site is limited and has most recently only been used for low intensity grazing, which does not routinely require tractors, large trailers or large machinery. During my visit, I noted that the associated agricultural land was small and, whilst only providing a snap-shot in time, seemed to be lightly used, aligning with the appellant's assertions.
27. The highway through the village is a country lane with several tight turns and is single width in places. From the site's access views to the left are largely clear, whereas views to the right are constrained with a visibility splay of only 20m, beyond which is a tight bend in the road. For this visibility splay to be provided and for the access to be used safely, vehicles would need to be passing at no faster than 17mph. Without a speed survey such low speeds (whilst likely) cannot be confirmed. Furthermore, the emerging right-hand visibility splay over-sails the corner boundary of the front garden of 4 Yew Tree Cottages and cannot be relied on as a retained visibility splay in the future.
28. However, whilst the Council is concerned as to the potential conflict caused between agricultural, holiday-let and residential users, the agricultural use of the access would be very infrequent. Furthermore, the access gates into the site seem to be recessed a sufficient distance for a vehicle to be fully parked off the highway while the gate is being opened.
29. No swept path analysis has been provided, but it appears from my on-site observations that an exiting vehicle would need to clear the access before an entering vehicle could gain access. Nonetheless, based on the light traffic levels

entering and exiting the site, and the low-key nature of the proposal, I am satisfied that the access would operate in a safe manner.

30. Motorist's forward visibility when travelling along the highway is restricted due to the blind bends, narrow highway forcing vehicles to drive cautiously and slowly. Due to the absence of footways, pedestrians were also noted walking within the highway providing a further reason for motorists to use the highway cautiously, which I noted whilst during my visit. These noted hazards would require motorists to be especially vigilant when using the route, inevitably resulting in slow speeds. As such, despite the absence of a speed survey, swept path analysis and the visibility splay oversailing the plot of No 4, I find that the access would operate in a safe manner taking the local context into consideration.
31. Consequently, the proposal would function in a safe manner without causing harm to highway safety. As such, the proposal complies with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which requires development to only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety.

Other Matters

32. The appellant reports that the proposal would create no risk to flooding and received no technical objections from consultees. Whilst I do not agree that the Highway Authority had no technical objections, an absence of harm in these respects can only be considered as neutral factors in the planning balance.
33. The appellant identifies that the proposal would reuse an existing building, would contribute to the vitality of the village, contribute to the local housing mix in providing a modest sized home (which is apparently currently limited in Great Ryton) and would contribute to the Council's housing supply. It is also asserted that the proposal would provide a Biodiversity net gain of 13.47%. These benefits weigh in favour of the proposal.
34. A letter of support has been made by an interested party, identifying the limited traffic impact of the scheme and that the barn would be used to accommodate aging parents. However, these matters are of limited weight in favour of the proposal.

Planning balance

35. It is undisputed between parties that the Council cannot demonstrate it has a 5-year housing land supply, with a supply of 4.61 years (as at 1 March 2026). As a result, the circumstances as set out under footnote 8 of the Framework apply. Consequently, the development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are to be deemed out-of-date. In light of Paragraph 11(d)(ii) the benefits of the scheme and its adverse impacts need to be considered against the Framework policies as a whole.
36. The proposal would represent a small infill plot within a settlement boundary, gaining support from paragraph 73(d) of the Framework. Furthermore, the proposal would help boost the supply of housing as promoted under the Framework, albeit that a single unit would make only a modest contribution in these respects. There would also be some, albeit limited, benefits in terms of the generation of construction employment and support from future occupiers to local services.

37. Nonetheless, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area, an objective sought by paragraph 135(c) which requires development to be sympathetic to local character. Furthermore, it would not provide a high standard of amenity for future occupiers as required by paragraph 135(f).
38. The several benefits of the scheme attract moderate weight overall. Against this, the identified harm in respect of character and appearance and for living conditions attracts significant weight. Therefore, I find the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the Framework. The presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out at paragraph 11 of the Framework would therefore not apply.

Conclusion

39. Therefore, for the above reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

B Plenty

INSPECTOR