
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 June 2026

by **C Billings BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 August 2026

Appeal Ref: 6007389

Barn adj to Spring Cottage, Thriftwicket Lane, Haytons Bent, Ludlow SY8 2AU

- 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 R Pritchard against the decision of Shropshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/04839/FUL.
 - The development proposed is conversion of existing farm building to a single dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site is within the Shropshire Hills National Landscape (SHNL). Therefore, I have a statutory duty to seek to further the purposes of this protected landscape, including whether the proposal would contribute to the conservation and enhancement of the special qualities of the SHNL. Therefore, views were sought from the main parties about the effect of the proposal on the SHNL and, I have had regard to any comments made.
3. Whether any unauthorised works have been carried out in relation to the appeal building or within the appeal site are not matters for this section 78 appeal. Therefore, I have determined the appeal proposal on the basis of the existing and proposed plans and the evidence provided.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area and appeal building, including whether the proposal would conserve and enhance the Shropshire Hills National Landscape and in regard the historic character and structural stability of the building.

Reasons

Character and appearance - landscape

5. The SHNL has several special qualities with key components including its hills, farmed countryside, woodlands, rivers and river valleys. The hills define the identity of the area and are the backbone of the national landscape. The patchwork of fields bounded by hedges result from generations of farming and the hedgerow and field trees give the landscape a mature character. Much of the field settlement pattern is very ancient with tiny lanes. Stone and timber framed buildings in a variety of styles

reflect the diversity of local material available. Also, the SHNL is a haven of tranquillity, peaceful and quiet, dark skies and unspoilt views.

6. The appeal site is accessed via an established track leading from a narrow single width road. It includes parts of two fields set on land that rises up from the road with mature boundary hedges and trees to the peripheries of the fields. There are long views from parts of the appeal site across the valley to the rolling hills of the wider national landscape area and, the appeal site has a tranquil feel containing notable attributes of the special qualities of the SHNL. This includes its scenic quality, field pattern, mature hedgerows and open rural character.
7. The appeal site includes parts of two separate fields and it is proposed to dissect the traditional field pattern, creating an anomalous triangular, rather than rectangular enclosed area, introducing hedge planting at odds to the existing historic mature field boundary layout in the area. The proposed garden area of the new dwelling would be extensive and due to the rising land topography, the lower portion of the garden, between the road and the cottage, would likely be prominent from wider views across the rolling hills and from the gap where the road access is. Also, the use of the land as garden would likely introduce more formal planting and domestic paraphernalia, which together with the anomalous shaped plot pattern, would be harmful to the open and traditional agricultural character of this part of the valued landscape.
8. There is an existing established vehicular access and field track leading up at an incline to the stone building. This has a rural character, with loose chippings and is predominately used by farm vehicles. Therefore, it is likely that enhancements would be needed to the track to allow domestic vehicles to use it, including additional surfacing and lighting. The access improvement works, together with the proposed large garden area, changes to the field pattern and boundary landscaping would harmfully affect the rural, traditional and unspoilt character and tranquillity of the appeal site. Consequently, this would harm the special qualities of the SHNL, even if the harm would be more localised.

Character and appearance - building

9. Policy MD7a of the Shropshire Local Development Framework Adopted Core Strategy (CS) (March 2011) sets out that the conversion of buildings to open market use will only be acceptable where the building is of a design and form which is of merit for its heritage/ landscape value, minimal alteration or rebuilding is required to achieve the development and the conversion scheme would respect the significance of the heritage asset, its setting and the local landscape character.
10. From the evidence provided and my site observations, the main part of the appeal building is a traditional stone building that pre-dates 1950. The proposal would convert the building back to its original, historic residential use and, while lean-to structures have been added on both sides of it and its roof has been replaced with modern material, the traditional stone walls and the main structural elements of the building remain intact. Also, there are a number of historic features within the building, including fireplaces, a bread oven and flagstone flooring.
11. Therefore, even if the building is not a non-designated heritage asset, the appeal building has some surviving historic interest. Additionally, as the building is an historic, stone structure, typical of traditional local stone buildings, it positively contributes to the special qualities of the SHNL. Consequently, the proposal would

involve the conversion of a building of historic merit which makes a positive contribution to the character and value of the surrounding landscape.

12. The proposal would replace one of two later lean-to additions at the side of the building, which is currently an open ended timber structure used as an animal shelter. The proposed side extension would have a larger floor area and overall volume than the existing lean-to and its roof would be slightly higher. However, as the existing larger lean-to on the other side of the building would be removed as part of the proposal, overall, the additions to the building would be smaller in volume and footprint compared to that in situ. Furthermore, the removal of the larger lean-to would expose more of the original stone walls of the building and the modern metal roof would be replaced with a tiled slate roof. This would make positive improvements to the character and appearance of the building, restoring and enhancing its traditional features.
13. While there would be a number of openings in the new lean-to and new rooflights, the existing openings in the main stone part of the building, on its gable and other side would be utilised, albeit their size amended. The overall shape and scale of the building would be maintained, including the overall height and form of the main roof of the stone building. Furthermore, the structural survey of the building sets out that it is structurally in good condition, suitable to convert to residential with only minor repairs needed. Therefore, minimal alteration or rebuilding would be required to convert the appeal building and the proposed conversion works would respect the building's heritage, setting and the surrounding landscape character.
14. In view of the above, while the proposed conversion of the building itself would not be harmful to its character and appearance, in regard to the wider proposed development, the proposal would harmfully affect the character and appearance of the surrounding area and fail to conserve and enhance the special qualities of the Shropshire Hills National Landscape. In this regard, the proposal would conflict with Policy CS5 of the CS and Policy MD7a of the Shropshire Council: Site Allocations and Management of Development (SAMDev) Plan (December 2015), which, amongst other matters, requires development to make a positive contribution to the character of the countryside.
15. Furthermore, there would be conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which sets out at paragraph 189 that, great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues.

Other Matters

16. The Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land, which is currently stated to be 4.61 years. Therefore, the proposal would contribute to the government's objective of boosting housing in an area where there is a shortfall. Although, one dwelling would only make a small contribution to this and so, I give moderate weight to this consideration.
17. There is an existing established access, which would provide a suitable and safe means of access to the proposed dwelling. The appeal site is in an area at low risk of flooding and, appropriate wildlife mitigation and biodiversity enhancement could be carried out, subject to conditions. However, these are neutral matters in regard

to the main issue and my findings on it. Therefore, these matters do not weigh in favour of the proposal.

18. That no objections have been raised by interested parties and the actions and advice of the Council are neutral matters that do not weigh in favour of the proposal.
19. Policy MD7b of the SAMDev sets out that permitted development rights will be removed to safeguard the character and setting of converted buildings, although the requirements of other policies within the development plan, including Policy CS5 of the CS and MD7a of the SAMDev would still need to be met. Therefore, this is a neutral consideration.
20. Paragraph 84 of the Framework supports the reuse of redundant or disused buildings. However, the appeal building is currently in use for the sheltering of horses and storage of hay and so it is not redundant or disused. Also, while it is asserted the building would become derelict without the proposed development, no substantive evidence has been provided to demonstrate this.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

21. While the Council cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land and the proposal would provide an additional dwelling to contribute toward the deficit, paragraph 11d)i of the NPPF sets out that policies within it that protect assets of particular importance, including the protection of National Landscapes, provides a strong reason for refusing the development proposed. Therefore, paragraph 11d) ii is not engaged in this instance.
22. For the reasons given above, the proposal conflicts with the development plan, and the material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it.
23. Accordingly, the appeal is dismissed.

C Billings

INSPECTOR