

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2016

by Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 27 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/K2230/W/16/3148643

96A Lorton Close, Gravesend, Kent DA12 4HA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Jason Rayfield against the decision of Gravesend Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20160062, dated 20 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two bedroom end terraced house.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of on the character and appearance of the area and highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The estate is characterised by modern two storey terraced properties. In this part of the estate the terraces are positioned at right angles and frame the central open grassed area. The ends of the terraces have openness as they do not overlap one another. Although other end terraced properties within this estate have gardens to the side, I observed that No.96A Lorton Close's enclosed side garden is larger than most.
 4. The proposed dwelling would have a design similar to No 96A with similar fenestration and shiplap cladding. It would continue the terrace having a similar width, depth and height and would be constructed using similar materials. Nonetheless, the proposal would erode the balanced configuration of the terraces which gives the development around the central open area its distinctive character. Although the land to the side of No.96A could accommodate a dwelling within the side garden area, such a development would reduce the space between dwellings at this point diminishing the openness to the north east corner. As a result, the dwelling would harm the layout and openness which characterises the uniformity of this grouping of terraced properties.
 5. For these reasons I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development is contrary
-

to Policy CS19 of the Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy which seeks new development to reflect local context and character and to make a positive contribution to the street scene, amongst other matters. It would also be contrary to Paragraph 53 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires local planning authorities to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens where development would cause harm to the local area.

Highway safety

6. Although the properties in Lorton Close do not have off-road parking provision on their individual plots, a garage block provides one garage space per dwelling and one car parking space in front of each garage. The Council indicates that this off-road parking is not sufficient to provide for all properties at Lorton Close and is concerned that on-street parking is not readily available in the area and that vehicles park on the footway presenting a safety hazard to road users and pedestrians.
7. Policy P3 of the Gravesham Local Plan First Review (the Local Plan) expects new development to make provision for vehicle parking in accordance with the Kent County Council Vehicle Parking Standards. Supplementary Planning Guidance 4 – Kent Vehicle Parking Standards requires two car parking spaces to be provided per two-bedroom dwelling. The existing garage would be allocated to the new dwelling but this would be at the expense of the parking relating to the existing dwelling. The appellant considers the site to be in a sustainable location, close to the town centre, with a good bus service on Valley Road and suggests that occupiers, being aware parking would not be available to them, would rely on bus travel or alternatively would walk to services and facilities.
8. I observed that Lorton Close terminates in a cul-de-sac. This would generally limit traffic to this part of Lorton Close to that of local residents. As this is not a through road travel speeds would be low. Whilst the highway and turning heads close to the appeal site had on-street parking taking place, further along Lorton Close there was a general absence of parked vehicles. I did not see vehicles parked on the footway. It appears to me that there is a moderate demand for on-street parking in Lorton Close and I note that parking is not restricted. Taking this into account, there would be sufficient space to park within a reasonably close proximity to the dwelling. I appreciate that on-street parking is likely to vary throughout the day, however the increase in on-street parking would be low. Whilst normally parking provision should be made on site, there is no reason before me that would suggest vehicles could not be parked on the highway or that this would not be a justified exception as allowed for by Policy P3 of the Local Plan. It would not, therefore, conflict with Policy P3 of the Local Plan which seeks to make provision for vehicle parking.
9. Taking the above matters into consideration, I conclude that the proposal would not have an adverse impact upon highway safety.

Other matters

10. The proposal would provide an additional two-bedroom family home within the urban area in a sustainable location close to the town centre with local facilities close by without impacting on the living conditions of adjoining occupiers. Whilst the proposal would contribute one dwelling to the Borough's overall

housing supply, this benefit would not outweigh the harm identified above in respect of the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusions

11. Whilst I have found the effect on parking and road safety in surrounding highways to be acceptable, this does not overcome the identified harm in relation to the other main issue. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR