
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 October 2016

by H Baugh-Jones BA(Hons) DipLA MA CMLI

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

Decision date: 7TH November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/W/16/3156202

Ferndale, Warwick Road, Gaydon, Warwickshire CV35 0HD

- 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 Anthony McGrath against the decision of Stratford on Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00861/FUL, dated 10 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of three dwellings, garage buildings and access to highway.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. Since determining the application, the Council has adopted the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 (July 2016) (CS). The CS policies supersede those of the Stratford on Avon District Local Plan Review 1996-2011. However, I am satisfied that the appellant has had the opportunity to comment on this and his case is not prejudiced by my taking the CS policies into account as the starting point for my decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises an area of open land that rises gently from Warwick Road. Notably, Warwick Road is gated a short distance from the site, which appears to be as a result of the changes to the nearby road and junction layouts. The site is bordered by mature hedgerows and there is a line of prominent Giant Redwood trees along the south eastern boundary.
 5. There is a small cul-de-sac (Claylands) off nearby Kineton Road that contains three detached dwellings. These properties form part of the residential development that extends to the north east out of Gaydon to meet the B4100. These dwellings have extensive rear gardens, thus maintaining a notable separation distance between the appeal site and the closer knit residential area to the south-east. Further, the sense of openness around the site is amplified by the mainly undeveloped area immediately to the north-west and by the
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absence of any development on the opposite side of Warwick Road. The substantial set-back of other dwellings and the existing stout hedgerows further prevent a clear sense of there being any notable development along this part of Warwick Road.

6. The existing vegetation around the site's boundaries combines with the overall surrounding openness to further visually distinguish it from the main built-up areas of Gaydon. For this reason and those already given, the site shares a greater affinity with the looser development formed by the small number of properties to the east and north-west and with the countryside beyond than it does with the more suburban character along Kineton Road and the other areas of Gaydon.
7. The proposed dwellings would be positioned towards the north-western part of the site, away from the line of Giant Redwoods. The access would be in the site's north-western corner with the dwellings arranged informally around a cul-de-sac. The result of this would be that the dwellings would be grouped relatively close together thereby creating a small but pronounced concentration of built form on the site. The proposed bungalow would be positioned close to the site's boundary with Warwick Road, which would not reflect the set-back of neighbouring dwellings. Although there are no clear proposals to remove significant amounts of the frontage hedgerow, the site would nonetheless be more open to views because of the opening that would be formed to facilitate the access.
8. It has been put to me that the proposed development would reflect the proximity of 'Cornerstone' and 'High Gables', which are detached dwellings located close to the junction of Kineton Road with Warwick Road. However, 'Cornerstone' is one of the dwellings in Claylands and I have already established that its separation from the appeal site places it within an area of suburban character in comparison to the more rural appearance of the area more closely associated with the appeal site. The same considerations apply to 'High Gables'.
9. Consequently, the proposed dwellings would be more visually prominent, resulting in a small but noticeable area of suburban character at odds with the sparse and unobtrusive surrounding development to the east and north-west.
10. I note the appellant's argument that the development would be reminiscent of a farmhouse and associated outbuildings. However, the variation in the design of the dwellings would not reflect the general simplicity typically found in agricultural buildings set around a main farmhouse. Moreover, I consider that the development would read as three clearly separate domestic dwellings, none of which would appear subservient or ancillary to a main building. In combination with the access road, individual driveways and a detached garage the development would therefore appear at odds with the more rural surroundings.
11. I do not agree that the development would share any notable similarities with the configuration of the main house on 'The Old Vicarage' site as this is a single and substantial building with smaller buildings around it. It is also set within a very large plot and does not display the same concentration of development within its grounds as would be the case with the proposed development.

12. My attention has been drawn to a development at Gaydon Inn to which the Council granted permission. However, I do not have the full details of this scheme before me and cannot therefore, draw any meaningful comparison between it and the appeal proposal.
13. I also note that outline permission has been granted, subject to a Section 106 planning obligation, for a major development, the allocation for which includes land opposite the appeal site. However, I have no details of the final form this development might take or any absolute certainty that it will go ahead. In any case, I must make my decision based on the current circumstances rather than what might or might not happen at some future point in time.
14. Taking all of the above into account, I consider that the proposal would run counter to CS Policy CS.5 that, amongst other things, requires development to maintain the district's landscape character and quality by having regard to local distinctiveness.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal does not succeed.

Hayden Baugh-Jones

Inspector