
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2016

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 8th November 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/W/16/3153398

4 Church Street, Silverstone NN12 8XA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant consent agreement or approval to details required by a condition of a planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr F Tant against the decision of South Northants District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2016/0856/RES, dated 1 April 2016, sought approval of reserved matters pursuant to condition No. 5 of planning permission, S/2014/1866/OUT, granted on 22 January 2015.
 - The application was refused by notice dated 2 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two new dwellings.
 - The details for which approval is sought are layout, scale and appearance.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr F Tant against the decision of South Northants District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matter

3. The original application for outline planning permission included means of access from Church Street and sought to reserve the matters relating to layout, scale, appearance and landscaping for future approval. The reserved matters application indicated that approval was sought for the layout, scale and appearance of the dwellings and that the landscaping would be dealt with at a later stage. I considered the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

4. The effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area including the Silverstone Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a bungalow with detached garage and adjoining car port that forms part of a linear development of residential properties running along both sides of Church Street within the CA. The neighbouring properties
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comprise of a mix of generally two-storey detached and terraced properties, with most buildings located close to the edge of the highway to the east of the site, but with some variation in the building line and form to the west. These properties, along with those in the surrounding streets within the CA, are predominantly built in local stone with grey slate pitched roofs. These features give the area a strong unifying character and appearance.

6. Policy BN5 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2014 (JCS) sets out that development in areas of historic significance such as CAs should be sympathetic to locally distinctive landscape features, design styles and materials in order to contribute to a sense of place.
7. Saved policy G3 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan 1997 (LP) seeks to ensure that development is compatible in terms of type, scale, siting, design and materials with the existing character of the locality and does not harm the character, appearance or setting of a Conservation Area. Saved policy EV1 of the LP states that, amongst other things, development will be expected to pay particular attention to existing site characteristics including the scale, density, layout, height, massing and materials in relation to the site and surroundings. Saved policy EV9 of the LP outlines that development in a CA will normally only be permitted where the design and scale respects the established character of the area and uses traditional materials appropriate to the area and saved policy EV10 seeks to ensure that development preserves or enhances the special character and appearance of the CAs. These policies are broadly consistent with the design and the historic environment aims in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
8. The Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Design in the Countryside 1998 (SPG) outlines proposals must not cause harm to the local area in terms of appearance, character and setting. The Silverstone Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan 2015 (CAAMP) identifies that the residential properties in the village follow mostly the same traditional form, materials and design. Thus, with the exception of some more modern buildings such as that on the appeal site, these provide a strong unifying character and appearance to the CA.
9. The proposal would involve the construction of two detached two storey dwellings set back from the road and would be almost identical, mirror images of each other (except for the porch details and materials). The dwelling on Plot 01 would be stone faced with a slate roof and have a detached double garage in front of the property. The dwelling on Plot 02 would be faced with red brick with a slate roof and have a one and half storey detached double garage with a self-contained unit of accommodation above at the rear of the property.
10. The layout, appearance and materials of the proposed dwellings would however be very much at odds with the older more traditional character and appearance of many of the properties in the area. The almost identical layout and mirror image of each other would appear contrived, in view of the building line and form in this part of the village.
11. The materials and design detailing of the dwellings including the use of red brick, external chimney breasts, long single casement width windows to the front elevation, roof lights on the rear elevation, exposed rafter feet, soffit and barge boards to the eaves/verges, corbelled plinths and the porch designs would be out of keeping with the traditional vernacular rural architecture in the

village and the guidance set out in the Council's SPG and the CAAMP. Similarly, the design of the double garages with up and over double width doors would be out of keeping with the traditional timber side hung and central opening doors found in the area. These shortcomings are exacerbated by the developments prominent position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along Church Street. As such I consider that the proposed development, by virtue of its layout, appearance and choice of materials would result in incongruous and out-of-keeping additions to the area and this part of the CA.

12. The appellant argues that the proposal would be consistent with the design aims in the national and local planning policies and guidance and that there are no specific requirements in the CAAMP for any rigid details or built form/design to be followed within the CA. The appellant states that the residential properties in the area vary in style and design and the proposed development would be in keeping with the general vernacular of the buildings in the CA. However, I do not concur with the appellant and consider that these factors would not mitigate the overall harm this scheme would cause to the character and appearance of the area and the CA.
13. I also note the appellant's willingness to carry out further discussions with the Council and the revised plans submitted in May 2016 to improve the design and appearance of the development. However, I note these revised plans were not accepted by the Council and do not form part of this appeal. In the absence of any detailed information about these revisions, I can only judge this case based on the evidence provided and my observations from my site visit.
14. Given the modest scale of the development affecting the CA, the harm would be less than substantial but in accordance with paragraph 134 of the Framework, that harm should be weighed against any public benefits to the proposal. I note the appellant states that the proposed development would have positive benefits through the removal of the modern and unattractive bungalow, garage and car port from the site and the building of the proposed dwellings. I find though insufficient public benefit to offset the identified harm to which I attach significant weight.
15. Consequently, I conclude that the development causes harm to the character and appearance of the area including the CA. It conflicts with Policy BN5 of the JCS, saved policies G3, EV1, EV9 and EV10 of the LP and the Council's SPG and the CAAMP as set out above. These policies and guidelines, amongst other things, seek to ensure that development respects the existing site characteristics, the local character and appearance of the area and protect and enhance the character of the Conservation Areas.
16. In addition, it would not accord with national guidance in the Framework that development should seek to secure a high quality of design and conserve heritage assets in an appropriate manner (paragraph 17); to respect the local character (paragraph 58); to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness (paragraph 60); and take into account the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness in conserving and enhancing the historic environment (paragraph 131).

Other matters

17. The Grade II listed Church of St Michael is located to the rear of the site. Given the modest scale of the development and the separation distance between the appeal site and the listed Church, the proposal would have no material impact on the setting of the listed building. The setting would therefore be preserved.
18. I have noted the other housing developments in the village drawn to my attention by the appellant. However, these housing developments have different development characteristics to the appeal scheme and in some cases arose in a different policy context some time ago. On the basis of the limited evidence provided I am not convinced that the circumstances are compellingly similar to those of the present appeal proposal. I therefore accord them limited weight as a precedent in this case.
19. I have noted the letter of local support, the Parish Council comments and the objections from some local residents to the proposal on the basis of impact on the character of the area and amenities of neighbouring properties, access, parking, and construction traffic and highway safety. However, in light of my findings of harm to the character and appearance of the area, there is no necessity for me to consider these matters further. In any event, the details of the access are already approved under the outline planning permission and appropriate conditions have been attached to deal with the access, parking and highway safety and cannot be revisited at this detailed reserved matters stage.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR