
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 January 2017

by Mike Hayden BSc DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/W/16/3159920

11 Birkhill, Castleford WF10 3LJ

- 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 Roy Lillyman against the decision of Wakefield Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00647/FUL, dated 11 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is an attached bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of Birkhill and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. Birkhill and the surrounding housing estate are characterised by a regular layout and design. Dwellings are formally laid out along the street in symmetrically designed groups of terraced properties or pairs of semi-detached houses. Buildings are set back from the road frontage to a consistent building line and equally spaced apart. Overall these features give the street and the wider estate a balanced architectural rhythm and a pleasing uniformity. Where newer infill developments have been added to the estate, such as St Edmunds Close to the northwest of the appeal site, they adopt the same design principles, maintaining the character and appearance of the area.
4. Policy CS10 of the Wakefield Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2009) (the Core Strategy) and Policy D9 of the Wakefield Local Development Framework Development Policies (2009) (the LDFDP) expect new development, amongst other things, to respect and enhance local character and distinctiveness in terms of design, scale, massing and layout. This is supported by paragraph 58 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which aims to ensure that development responds to local character and reflects the identity of its surroundings.
5. The appeal property is one of a pair of semi-detached houses, which sits at the end of a row of three pairs of symmetrically designed and proportioned semis along the south-west side of Birkhill. It benefits from a large side garden which

creates a gap within the street frontage between the older estate housing and the newer development at St Edmunds Close. I acknowledge that the plot is large enough to accommodate the proposed attached bungalow, without unduly compromising the space.

6. However, the design, scale and massing of the bungalow would fail to respect the architecture of the host property and the street. Its overall width, the height and size of its roof and the absence of a set back from the frontage of the main dwelling would result in an addition which would not be subordinate to the host property. Its depth and the height of its roof would also dominate the side elevation of the existing property when viewed from the north-west. Although the use of a hipped roof appears to match that of the main house, the submitted elevation plans show that it would in fact have a steeper pitch to accommodate rooms in the loft space, resulting in a discordant appearance. Overall, the design of the proposed bungalow would unbalance the symmetry of the pair of semi-detached houses to which it would be attached. As a result, it would interrupt the rhythm of architecture along the street and detract from the uniform character and appearance of the area.
7. I noted the other examples of single storey properties along the street, including 15 and 41 St Edmunds Close. However, these have been purpose designed as part of a new development. The attached bungalow at no. 15 has been designed to infill a corner in the development. Its single storey, lean-to design is subordinate to the main two-storey components of the scheme at this corner. This would not be the case with the appeal proposal.
8. On this basis, I conclude that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of Birkhill and the surrounding area. Accordingly, it would be contrary to Policy CS10 of the Core Strategy and Policy D9 of the LDFDP and, consequently, it would conflict with paragraph 58 of the Framework.

Other Matters

9. I acknowledge that the proposed bungalow would offer benefits including its proximity to local shops and services in The Square, the accessibility of the location by public transport and the contribution of a smaller dwelling to the housing mix in the area. I also note the Council's view that the proposal would not result in overlooking or overshadowing of neighbouring properties. However, the absence of harm to neighbours' living conditions and the advantages of the location and dwelling type do not outweigh or overcome the harm the proposed scheme would cause to character and appearance.
10. I have also considered the personal circumstances of the appellant and his desire to provide purpose built accommodation nearby for his family. Whilst I am sympathetic to this need, it does not justify a dwelling design which would harm the character and appearance of the locality.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above and taking all other matters into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Hayden

INSPECTOR