

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 April 2017

by Chris Forrett BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/B1930/W/16/3164544

17 South Riding, Bricket Wood, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 3NG

- 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 Ms Julie Plunkett against the decision of St Albans City & District Council.
 - The application Ref 5/16/2639, dated 23 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing and erection of 2 detached dwellings (revised scheme).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on the south side of South Riding. The area is generally characterised by bungalows, several of which have accommodation within the roofspace. A large proportion of properties in the area are built on or in proximity to the side boundaries with the majority having roofs which slope away from the side boundaries which gives a sense of spaciousness between the respective properties. Notable exceptions to this are 11 South Riding, which has a half hipped roof, and 19 South Riding (adjacent to the appeal site) which has a gable wall to each side. No 19 does not have any dormer windows and has a shallow pitched roof. It is also lower in overall height than the proposed development.
 4. The proposed development incorporates half hipped roofs with dormer windows. However, the roof design of the proposed No 17a would be unbalanced as the extent of the half hip roof differs from each side. It also has a further two storey projection to the side set back into the site. The effect of this unbalanced appearance, particularly when combined with the large dormer window to the front, is that this dwelling appears to have been squeezed into the available space. This would also be exacerbated by the kinked boundary between the two new properties and the visible two storey element further back into the site.
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5. In respect of the relationship of the development to the existing dwellings, the proposal would leave ample space between the new No 17 and No 15 and would maintain the spacious character between those properties. However, the relationship between the proposed No 17a and No 19 is significantly more enclosed, principally as a result of the gabled roof to No 19. The overall effect of this is that the relationship between these two dwellings would be cramped particularly at first floor level.
6. Considering all of these factors, the overall effect of the development is one which does not reflect the character and appearance of the area, principally as a result of the lack of spacing between the first floors between the respective properties.
7. I have also had regard to the overall depth of the proposed dwellings from front to back and the effect on the character and appearance of the area. In this respect, given the staggered nature of the dwellings on this section of South Riding, and the large rear gardens which would remain, I consider that this would not give rise to any significant harm to the overall character of the area.
8. I have also had regard to the other developments brought to my attention. Whilst St Lukes Church is a substantial building it is set in open grounds which mature trees to the South Riding frontage. The two storey properties on the corner of The Crescent are linked by flat roofed single storey element and therefore main a sense of space between the properties at first floor level. In respect of 59 and 61 Mount Pleasant Lane, from what I saw on site, Mount Pleasant has a much more varied character with a wide variety of differing property styles. Moreover, each case must be decided on its individual merits.
9. For the above reasons, the proposed dwellings would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policies 69 and 70 of the City and District of St Albans District Local Plan Review (1994) and the Framework which seek, amongst other matters, to ensure that development protects the character and appearance of the area.

Other matters

10. I have also had regard to the representations made and in particular to the effect of the development on the living conditions on the occupiers of 19 South Riding. In this respect, I find that the development would not have such an effect on daylight or sunlight, including to the photovoltaic panels on the roof of No 19, to the extent that it would warrant with withholding of planning permission on this ground. Turning to the potential of overlooking of the garden areas of neighbouring properties I find that the development would not give rise to any significant or excessive level of overlooking or loss of privacy. However, this does not overcome the harm I have already found.

Conclusion

11. Taking all matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Chris Forrett

INSPECTOR