
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2017

by Rachael A Bust BSc (Hons) MA MSc LLM MEnvSci MInstLM MCMI MRTPI

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

Decision date: 26 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/17/3167899

Land at 15 Mill Road, Hartford, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire PE29 1YJ

- 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 GLS Developments Ltd against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02219/FUL, dated 7 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of dwelling with associated parking and turning.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Mill Road is a pleasant established residential area within Hartford. There is a mixture of semi-detached and detached dwellings set back from the road with off-street parking. The majority of the dwellings sit comfortably and proportionally within their plot facing the highway and contributing equally to the street scene. Many of the properties have no formal boundary treatment or means of enclosure which gives Mill Road a sense of openness and space.
 4. The appeal site would be created from the subdivision of the plot of No 15 Mill Road, thereby removing its existing garage, some parking and garden. No 15 would retain sufficient off-street parking provision for 2 vehicles.
 5. No 15 is one of a number of bungalows that are set back from Mill Road behind an area of public open space with mature trees. A private driveway serves Nos 11 – 17 and a small area of hard standing outside Nos 15 and 17 allows vehicles to manoeuvre.
 6. Nos 15 and 17 have low walls defining their front boundaries. A footpath linking Mill Road with Desborough Road lies between Nos 15 and 17 and is well enclosed by mature vegetation. The existing properties Nos 15 and 17 give a strongly defined corner to this part of Mill Road.
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7. The appeal site is triangular in shape, bounded to the south by No 15, to the west lies the rear garden of No 58 Desborough Road, also a bungalow, and to the north the footpath and to the east lies No 17. The proposed 2-bedroomed bungalow would not have a direct frontage to Mill Road. It would be accessed via the existing private driveway and the footpath linking Mill Road with Desborough Road.
8. The intended siting of the new dwelling has been re-positioned further forward within the plot to increase the size of the rear garden when compared to a previously refused application. However, even in this revised position the rear garden would still be significantly shorter than the rear gardens of the neighbouring properties.
9. This would appear cramped and at odds with the spaciousness that characterises the original planned corner layout of this part of Mill Road. The new dwelling would therefore appear as a discordant element in the street scene, an adverse impact that would be amplified by its set-back position and lack of a direct frontage onto Mill Road.
10. Although the proposed design is simple and would not be out of keeping with the style of existing bungalows in surrounding area, this does not outweigh the harm that I have identified. I therefore conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
11. This would conflict with Policies H32 and En25 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Part 1 (HLP) adopted 1995, Policy HL5 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration (HLP A) adopted 2002, and Policy CS1 of the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy (CS) adopted 2009. Taken together these policies expect new housing to demonstrate good quality design and a layout that respects the townscape and landscape of the wider locality, including the local pattern of streets and spaces. These accord with the National Planning Policy Framework which expects development to make positive improvements to the quality of the built environment.
12. The Appellant refers to other examples of new dwellings which have been permitted on Mill Road. I did view these on my site visit; however I do not find these dwellings to be sufficiently comparable with the proposed development at the appeal site. In any case I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.

Other matters

13. A private driveway serves Nos 11, 13, 15 and 17 Mill Road and it has been suggested that there could be congestion arising from increased numbers of vehicles within this area. I do not find that the limited potential increase of vehicles arising from a single additional dwelling would be likely to result in congestion on the private driveway.
14. The occupier of No 58 Desborough Road is concerned that the proposed development would adversely affect their living conditions through a loss of light. The proposed bungalow would be sited at a sufficient distance from No 58 such that I find no harm would arise to the living conditions. However this does not outweigh the overall harm that I have identified in relation to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

15. I have considered all the other matters raised but none change my overall conclusion that the appeal should be dismissed.

Rachael A Bust

INSPECTOR