
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: 31 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/G2815/W/17/3166605

258 Newton Road, Rushden, Northamptonshire NN10 0SY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission including access and scale.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Zofia Sampson against the decision of East Northamptonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00542/OUT, dated 7 March 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is 2No detached dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal proposal seeks outline planning permission including access and scale. Layout, external appearance and landscaping are reserved for future consideration should planning permission be granted.
3. For clarity drawing 15-122-01 and 15-122-02 were the basis of the Council's refusal. Drawing 15-122-03 was submitted for this appeal, it re-confirms the proposed dwellings to be 1.5 storeys in height as previously shown in drawing 15-122-02. It offers a street scene, indicative design of front elevations, amended siting and confirms the garage size to be single for each dwelling. As layout and external appearance are matters to be reserved, they are not within the scope of this appeal. Drawing 15-122-03 also shows an increase in the access width from 4.5 metres to 4.8 metres. As access is a matter for this appeal no prejudice would arise through the inclusion of drawing 15-122-03 in my decision making.
4. Since the Council's decision the North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy, adopted June 2008, has been replaced by the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (NNJCS), adopted 14 July 2016. I have determined this appeal on the basis of the NNJCS.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal upon the character of the surrounding area.
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Reasons

6. Newton Road extends outwards into the open countryside away from the main built up part of Rushden. There are two isolated groups of properties on Newton Road separated by large agricultural fields. One group is at the northern end, and the second group containing the appeal site is approximately halfway along Newton Road. Another field separates this second group of properties from the formal linear residential development along Newton Road which joins with Avenue Road.
7. The appeal site is located centrally in a group of 6 properties, Nos. 250 to 264¹ Newton Road set within the open countryside. There are 3 bungalows, including the appeal property, and 3 two-storey houses. No 260 is a bungalow immediately to the south-east of the appeal site. Although it extends for a significant depth into its plot, the stepped nature of the design minimises the visual impression of its scale. This means that from the Newton Road frontage it has the appearance of a relatively small and unassuming property. No 256 is a two storey house located to the north-west of the appeal site.
8. The properties in this group all front onto the highway with the exception of No 252 which is set back at an angle. There is some variation in the frontage width of each plot. However, visually from Newton Road all properties have the appearance of being in proportion to their individual plots. There are also visual gaps between the properties. Currently the visual gaps between the existing property on the appeal site and its immediate neighbours are contained within the appeal site. The visual gaps together with the open frontages contribute to a general sense of space and openness which in combination with the low density of development forms the character of the surrounding area.
9. The introduction of two detached dwellings with attached single garages would adversely affect the sense of space and openness. The subdivision of the existing plot would intensify the built development in this pleasant countryside location. Whilst siting is a reserved matter, the subdivision of the appeal site would lead to built development needing to be located closer to the boundaries with Nos. 256 and 260. The existing garage of No 256 is sited on the shared boundary with the appeal site. The side elevation of No 260 is in close proximity to the appeal site boundary. Consequently the appeal proposal would significantly diminish the existing visual gaps between the proposed properties and their neighbours.
10. In conclusion I find that the scale of the appeal proposal would harm the existing character of the surrounding area. Accordingly the appeal proposal fails to satisfactorily respond to the site's immediate and wider context and local character as required by Policy 8 of the NNJCS.
11. Scale is a matter for consideration in this appeal and it has been confirmed that the proposal is for two 1.5 storey detached dwellings. Height is an important matter in this location and if I were minded to allow this appeal this could be controlled through the imposition of a suitable planning condition. However, this does not outweigh the harm I find to the character of the surrounding area.

¹ There are no properties numbered 254 and 262.

Other Matters

12. The appellant refers to other examples of similar developments within the locality. However, full details of the circumstances that led to these proposals being accepted has not been provided, so I cannot be sure that they represent a direct parallel to this appeal proposal. I did view these other properties on my site visit but I did not find them to demonstrate sufficiently similar characteristics to this appeal. In any case I have considered the appeal proposal on its own merits.

Conclusion

13. I conclude that the intensification of development on this plot would harm the character of the surrounding area. Consequently it fails to satisfactorily respond to the site's immediate and wider context and local character as set out in Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, adopted July 2016.
14. The appeal is dismissed.

Rachael A. Bust

INSPECTOR