
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2017

by Sarah Colebourne MA, MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/N3020/W/17/3169000

88 Sheepwalk Lane, Ravenshead, Nottinghamshire, NG15 9FB

- 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 Stoneabbey Development against the decision of Gedling Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/0848, dated 21 January 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of the existing dwelling and erection of 7 no. detached dwellings with integral garages. Block up existing vehicular access, provide new relocated vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The most relevant policies for the purpose of this appeal are policy 10 of the Council's Aligned Core Strategy (CS) (2014) and saved policies ENV1 and H7 of its Replacement Local Plan. Those accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to encourage good design and ensure that new development makes a positive contribution to its surroundings.
4. The appeal site is located within the existing village envelope of Ravenshead within an established residential area and the Council has raised no objection to the principle of the development. The surrounding area is characterised by a wide mix of property ages and styles which includes bungalows and houses, predominantly large detached dwellings of high quality on medium to large sized plots. There are previous developments, including tandem developments, of contemporary dwellings within the garden areas of nearby properties, most notably at nos 92/94 adjacent to the appeal site, a development of four detached dwellings currently under construction. Other than at that adjacent development, I saw no other instances where two dwellings are of the same style. The wide gaps between dwellings and their set back from the road behind generous front gardens with heavily treed or hedged

boundaries, together with the variety of dwelling styles, are the predominant features that contribute positively to the spacious, leafy character of the area.

5. Part of the appeal site has previously been granted permission for redevelopment (ref 2016/0060) comprising three dwellings. The two plots at the rear of the current scheme (plots C and D) are identical to those in the approved scheme. Permission has also been granted for land at the front of the appeal site for detached dwellings in the front gardens of no 90 (ref 2017/0301) and no 86 (ref 2017/0356). The layout plan of those developments submitted by the appellant shows that there would be wide gaps for private drives between four of the five approved frontage dwellings at nos 88, 90A, 92 and 94. Although the gap between the frontage dwellings at no 86a and no 88 would be smaller, the slight set back and difference in the dwelling footprints of those dwellings would maintain a satisfactory degree of separation. Consequently these recently approved developments would maintain the spacious character and the mix of dwelling styles of the surrounding area.
6. The proposed development would demolish the existing split level dwelling at no 88 towards the rear of the site replacing it with two detached houses on plots C and D of the same L-shaped plan and hipped roof design. At the front of the site, which includes the front gardens of nos 86, 88 and 90, would be five detached houses of a uniform rectangular plan and pitched roof design which differs from those at the rear.
7. I have noted that emerging policy LPD 33 in the Part 2 Local Plan, which is currently undergoing examination, seeks to ensure that proposals are at a density of no less than 20 dwellings per hectare. Given the status of that policy and, in any case, as the particular characteristics and localised nature (as referred to in the supporting text to the policy) of Sheepwalk Lane differ significantly from other parts of Ravenshead, for example, the Linwood Crescent area to the rear of the site, I give this very little weight. Most of the five dwellings at the front of the site (other than plots B and E which are separated by the private drive to the houses at the rear) have narrow gaps between them, with integral garages and frontage parking. This would result in a density of development above that of most of the surrounding area, both in itself and cumulatively with the adjacent development. Even though the development at nos 92/94 is of a slightly higher density its impact, as a result of the different topography which comprises a dip in which the two frontage dwellings are sited, the lower number of dwellings and the wider gaps between dwellings, is acceptable.
8. Given the recently approved developments which are on a broadly similar building line, I am satisfied that the distance of the proposed houses from the back edge of the footway is acceptable in terms of maintaining reasonably generous front gardens and would enable the retention of most of the frontage trees. I have noted that the floor level of the proposed houses would be below the level of the highway, that plot A would have a similar ridge height to the recent dwelling at no 92 and that the dwellings to the rear (including nos 86 and 90 which have permission for new roofs at greater ridge heights) would provide a backdrop to the development. However, the continuation of the building line from the dwellings at nos 92/94, the rising land levels from north to south across the site, the closely spaced layout of the frontage dwellings and the uniformity of their size and form, would introduce a scale and massing

which would not be in keeping with the predominant character of Sheepwalk Lane.

9. Most of the very tall frontage trees, which include a dense mix of deciduous and evergreen trees, provide a good level of screening along the frontage, and together with the trees and hedges within the site, allow only restricted views at present. The frontage trees would be retained and supplemented by additional landscaping but other groups of trees and hedges within the site would be removed. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has raised no objection to that subject to the tree protection recommended in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. It would, however, open up views into the site from outside both the new access in the centre of the frontage and the existing accesses to nos 86 and 90. The density and homogeneity of the dwellings would be apparent from those public viewpoints and this would harm the visual appearance of the area, even though only the rooftops would be seen from the viewpoint around the corner as shown in the appellant's photomontage.
10. From what I saw at my visit I would disagree with the appellant that the existing bungalow at no 88 is 'ramshackle' or overgrown. The improvement of the site is therefore unnecessary and I therefore attach very little weight to this.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to policies 10 in the CS and ENV1 and H7 in the Replacement Local Plan.

Planning balance and conclusion

12. The appellant has said that there is clearly a requirement to meet the housing needs of the Borough and that this is a sustainable location in which to do so. The Council has not contested that statement. I have not been provided with any detailed evidence regarding housing land supply. However, even if I were to conclude that there is a shortfall in the five year supply of housing land as suggested by the appellant and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date, the adverse impacts of granting permission in this case would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits given the small contribution that would be made to housing land supply.
13. I conclude that the proposal fails to accord with the development plan and the Framework as a whole and does not, therefore, constitute sustainable development for the purposes of paragraph 14 of the Framework. There are no other material considerations that warrant determining the appeal otherwise and the appeal should be dismissed.

Sarah Colebourne

Inspector