
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2017

by Andrew McGlone BSc MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 21 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/U2805/W/17/3170634

44 Arnhill Road, Gretton, Northamptonshire NN17 3DN

- 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 D Gow against the decision of Corby Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00505/DPA, dated 28 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is an extension to the existing bungalow and the erection of one new dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: (i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, including the setting of the adjacent Gretton Conservation Area (GCA); (ii) the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupants of 42 and 46 Arnhill Road, with regards to privacy; and (iii) the effect of the proposed access arrangements on highway safety and nearby residents' living conditions.

Reasons

3. Saved Policy P6(R) of the Corby Borough Local Plan (Local Plan) and Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (Core Strategy), with regard to paragraph 215 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), seek high quality design; good living conditions for all occupants of land and buildings and safe and suitable access for all. As they are broadly consistent with the Framework, I attach these policies full weight.

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is a detached hipped roof bungalow on the north-western side of Arnhill Road to the east of the village. As with the site's immediate neighbours on this side of the road, the property benefits from a long linear landscaped rear garden which slopes down to dwellings on Hatton Lane. There are a number of trees and shrubs in the lower part of the garden.
5. While revisions have been made to the appeal scheme so that it is materially smaller than the scheme refused planning permission¹, part of the proposal would still include the erection of a new dwelling to the rear of the existing

¹ Council Application Ref: 15/00276/DPA

dwelling. This would be a tandem form of development which would conflict with saved Local Plan Policy P6(R) as it explains that proposals in the form of 'tandem' development will not be permitted.

6. By introducing a new dwelling behind the linear row of dwellings that front Arnhill Road, the existing characteristically long rear garden would be split into two. While there is no cohesive style or form of dwellings nearby, the extra built form, including the long driveway and boundary treatment to plot 1 would be visible from Arnhill Road and neighbouring properties. These would, even accounting for the site's levels together with the stable buildings and access track to the rear of No 46, visually appear at odds with the site's immediate context and local character. This would be contrary to the design principles in the Sustainable Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).
7. Even so, I recognise examples have been referred to, comparisons drawn to the proposal's density and reference has been made to the Framework which is a material consideration according to paragraph 212. I also note the approach set out in the Planning Practice Guidance².
8. The examples at 15a and 23 Arnhill Road are relatively near to the appeal site. However, due to the topography on the opposite side of the road, there is a two-fold form of development, created by the varied position of dwellings and ancillary outbuildings. As a result some driveways do extend some way from the road. These are acute and distinctive differences in the character and appearance of development here compared to the appeal site.
9. The sites at High Street and Maltings Road do not seem to be directly alike. The former is part of a line of dwellings on Northern Close while the latter's character and appearance is very different. The site off Kirby Road is behind the village hall, rather than an existing dwelling. Although dwellings were granted approval at the rear of the site, I do not have full details of the circumstances of the example at 1 Hatton Lane to make a full comparison. Lastly, the scheme at 196 Cottingham Road³ lies in Corby which is some distance away and in any event I do not have full details of the case. Overall, I do not consider these lend weight to a departure from the development plan.
10. Turning now to the proposal's density, I acknowledge there are areas of development nearby which display a range of densities. According to the appellant's figures the range lies between 9.8 dwellings per hectare (dph) and 15.7 dph. The proposal is said to lie some way in-between this range at 11.33 dph. However, while this density broadly reflects developments nearby, the figures presented do not include the appeal site's immediate neighbours on Arnhill Road. These properties would, due to their spacious plots, have a lower density than even the properties on the opposite side of Arnhill Road facing the site. Thus, the new dwelling would not reflect the areas immediate character.
11. It appears to me that the proposed development would sit just outside the GCA. The extension to the existing dwelling would alter the appearance of the existing dwelling and the proposed new dwelling would be different to nearby buildings. However, the form, design and style of the proposed development leads me to consider that they would have a neutral effect on the character and appearance of the GCA. Thus, it would preserve the GCA.

² Planning Practice Guidance Paragraph: 001 Reference ID: 50-001-20160519

³ Council Application Ref: 08/00407/DPA

12. The proposed new dwelling would make a modest contribution in boosting the supply of housing in this sustainable urban location in accordance with paragraph 47 of the Framework. The extended property would also create a larger family home that would widen the choice of housing available locally in tune with paragraph 50 of the Framework. Added to this, I do not share the Council's concerns insofar as the scale of plot 1, given the variety found locally. Although these are positive aspects of this small scale development proposal, I do not consider that they individually or cumulatively outweigh my concerns in respect the proposal's effect on the areas character and appearance.
13. On this issue, I conclude that the proposal would significantly affect the character and appearance of the area, even though it would preserve the CGA. The proposal would be contrary to saved Local Plan Policy P6(R) which sets out that proposals in the form of tandem development will not be permitted; Core Strategy Policies 8 and 11, the SPD along with paragraph 17 of the Framework; which jointly seek, among other things, to secure high quality design and for development to respond to and reinforce the site's immediate and wider context so that it does not materially harm the character of the settlement.

Living conditions

14. The bungalow of No 42 lies on the right hand side of the appeal site, while the two storey dwelling of No 46 lies on the left hand side.
15. Both plots 1 and 2 would have windows in their flank elevations serving bedrooms, bathrooms and a utility with an elevated balcony to the rear. In respect of plot 1, an extra window in the flank elevation is proposed which would serve bedroom two. However, one of the existing windows in this elevation serves a second bedroom. Thus, its position would be changed and the existing window would serve a bathroom. Although the new window would be higher than a typical fence, it would be sited further away from the rear elevation of No 42. As a result, I do not consider the privacy of the occupants of No 42, insofar as these changes are concerned, would be unduly harmed.
16. Turning now to the garden areas of Nos 42 and 46. The existing boundaries allow views from the site into the gardens at various points. Hence these areas are not secluded and there is already a good degree of overlooking. Even so, the balcony areas of plots 1 and 2 would introduce elevated vantage points that would increase the degree of overlooking into the rear gardens of Nos 42 and 46. Also, despite the existing relationship between the appeal site and No 42, the flank windows in plot 2 would increase the level of overlooking due to the constant ability of future occupants' to be able to view into the rear garden of No 42. So, while each dwelling may form a good living environment with good-sized amenity spaces and the revised scheme affords generous interface distances, the proposals would harm the living conditions of the occupants' of Nos 42 and 46. This would not accord with paragraph 17 of the Framework.
17. Thus, on this issue, I conclude that the proposal would adversely affect the living conditions of the occupants' of Nos 42 and 46, with regards to privacy. The proposal would be contrary to Core Strategy Policy 8, saved Local Plan Policy P6(R) and paragraph 17 of the Framework; which together, among other things, seek development not to adversely impact on the privacy of neighbouring properties, by reason of overlooking.

Access arrangements

18. This part of Arnhill Road is relatively quiet and serves a number of houses. The road is capable of taking both vehicular and pedestrian movements. Changes are proposed to the existing access and driveway to provide off-street parking provision and a detached garage/car port for each dwelling.
19. The appellant accepts the access and driveway are shy of the sought after width and depth. However, vehicle manoeuvres would be undertaken off the road and each dwelling would have the use of the garage/car port, which would enable the storage of cycles. I do not therefore consider the proposals would, given the use of Arnhill Road, the existing access and the proposed level of off-street parking and bin storage, lead to any detrimental highway safety effects.
20. The flank elevation of No 46 has two windows at ground floor and two windows at first floor. The proposed access would run along this elevation. The built form would be drawn away from the ground floor windows and improve the aspect from No 46 once the garage is demolished, but vehicles would still pass in front of the elevation. However, the volume of movements would be proportionate to the single extra dwelling. On this basis, I do not consider that the proposed access arrangements would lead to undue harm.
21. For these reasons, on this issue, I conclude that the proposal would comply with Core Strategy Policy 8 and saved Local Plan Policy P6(R); which together seek, among other things, developments to make adequate and safe vehicular access with satisfactory provision for parking and manoeuvring.

Other Matters

22. Despite the appellant's reference to bullet point 4 of paragraph 14 and paragraph 49 of the Framework, as I explained earlier the development plan⁴ is not considered to be absent, silent or relevant policies out-of-date. Also, there is no evidence to suggest that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites.

Conclusion

23. I have found no harm in relation to the proposed access arrangements. I also recognise that the proposal would contribute modestly in economic and social terms through to the supply and mix of housing, construction jobs and spending in the local area. These are outweighed, however, by the harm that I have found in relation to the scheme's impact upon living conditions and the character and appearance of the area. Thus, the proposal would not fulfil the social and environmental roles and as such would not be a sustainable form of development as sought by Core Strategy Policy 1 and the Framework.
24. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew McGlone

INSPECTOR

⁴ The North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 and saved Policies in the Corby Borough Local Plan.