
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2017

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 25 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/W/17/3171884

67 Garden City, Langport, Somerset TA10 9SX

- 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 N Bown against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/04807/FUL, dated 21 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises part of the large garden of 67 Garden City, which is located on a corner at the junction with Somerton Road. The dwellings along this busy stretch of Somerton Road are generally set back from the highway, but are fairly diverse in terms of their style, form and appearance.
4. The dwellings in Garden City display considerably greater uniformity. Their brick and render front elevations face the road, and often sit below a hipped roof. The dwellings, many of which are semi-detached, follow a regular layout, and are set back from the highway often behind gardens, or driveways. The appearance and siting of the dwellings, together with the gardens, grass verges and central green space, give Garden City a spacious, cohesive and landscaped character which, the Council states, was inspired by the Garden Cities movement.
5. Although the semi-detached, hipped roof dwelling at No. 67 faces Somerton Road, its general style, materials and form broadly reflect the appearance of the Garden City properties. Its side garden and the side garden on the opposite side of this junction provide a largely symmetrical and spacious entrance into Garden City.
6. The proposed dwelling would occupy much of No. 67's side garden. Although its front face would roughly align with that dwelling, its flank would be sited

relatively close to the highway, and well forward of the front faces of the dwellings to the south-east. In this prominent location, and in the context of the grain of development in Garden City, that siting and layout would appear cramped and incongruous. That adverse impact on the area's character would be exacerbated by the proposal's contrasting gabled roof, which would also further reduce the sense of spaciousness.

7. The appellant has drawn my attention to a dwelling that has been permitted adjoining 25 Garden City. However, although that dwelling is also on a corner plot, it is some way from this site at the other end of the estate. Additionally, it does not project beyond the general building line of the Garden City properties to the same degree as would be the case here, and the dwelling opposite has had a large, gabled side extension. Consequently, that development does not change my conclusions regarding the harm that this scheme would cause here.
8. The site is within the defined development area, where the Council notes that the principle of development is acceptable subject to compliance with other policies. However, although the proposal would contribute towards housing needs as required by Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2006 – 2028) 2015, it would significantly harm the area's character and appearance, and would thereby conflict with those parts of the policy which require high quality design and which promote local distinctiveness. It would conflict with the similar approach in the National Planning Policy Framework ('Framework').
9. There were representations raising no objection to, or in support of, the scheme, some citing housing needs and the dwelling's compatibility with its surroundings. In its favour, the proposal would make an efficient use of the land, and would make a very modest contribution to economic development and to housing supply. That in a sustainable market town location, in a district that cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply as required by Framework paragraph 47.
10. Nevertheless, although the scheme would contribute towards the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development, it would cause significant environmental harm. Applying Framework paragraphs 49 and 14, even if Policy EQ2 should be given limited weight due to the Council's housing supply position, the adverse impacts of the scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Consequently, the scheme would not be the sustainable development for which the Framework places a presumption in favour. For those reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR