



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2017

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 22 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/17/3173295

8 Sele Road, Hertford SG14 1NG

- 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 Kekstas & Ms R Dittrich against the decision of East Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 3/16/2164/FUL, dated 20 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garage and erection of one detached, two-bedroom 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 surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Sele Road is a suburban residential street consisting of either semi-detached properties such as those to the north and south of the appeal site, or terraced properties, such as those to the south-west in a cul-de-sac offshoot. There is uniformity in terms of the architectural design including large and prominent front gables and hipped roofs at the side. There is also consistency in terms of regularly stepped front building lines, and regular building and plot widths and spacing between properties. The southern end of Sele Road where the appeal site is situated also has consistency in terms of established hedgerows along front boundaries which provides greenery in the street scene.
4. The spacing between most of the semi-detached properties is close, but there are greater gaps between Nos 4 to 10 and Nos 31 and 33 due to the bend in the road. These larger gaps help to provide a visual break in development coming around the bend from the south, with the properties on the straight section of the road provided with clear separation space. Thus, Sele Road has a strong and uniform character and appearance that is visually attractive and distinct from adjoining streets, including the detached and semi-detached properties on Hertingfordbury Road to the south and east.
5. The proposed development would sit forward of the front building line for No 10, but given the stepped building line along the road, this would not be obvious. However, the development would be narrower than existing properties and occupy a narrower plot. While the space between the development and Nos 8 and 10 would be similar at the front to others on Sele

Road, the tapering nature of the site means the space would appear particularly cramped at the rear next to No 8. Moreover, the gap between Nos 8 and 10 would be greatly eroded and the separation space seen from the south would diminish.

6. The architectural design of the new property would seek to reflect elements of the existing properties, but the front gable would not be as large or as prominent as existing ones, with a gable ended roof on either side rather than hipped. As a result, the property would not be in keeping with the uniform design of the road and would also be incongruous as a detached building.
7. It would appear that there is enough space in front of the new property and No 8 for three parking spaces, but this would require the partial loss of the boundary hedge and a reduction in the street scene greenery. Based on the above considerations, the proposed development would have a significant negative effect on the character and appearance of Sele Road in terms of its design, layout and massing. I appreciate that the appellant received pre-application advice suggesting alterations to their proposal, but this does not lessen the harm I have identified.
8. The Council accepts that it cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply and so relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date in line with paragraph 49 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that where relevant policies are out of date, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the NPPF taken as whole or specific policies in the NPPF indicate development should be restricted.
9. The proposed development would provide a boost to local housing supply and would be in an urban location with good access to services and facilities including public transport. However, as a single house proposal, these benefits would be modest. In contrast, the negative effect on the character and appearance of the area would be significant for the reasons given above. Therefore, the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and so the proposal would not represent sustainable development.
10. In conclusion, the proposed development would have a significant negative effect on the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not accord with Policies ENV1 and HSG7 of the East Herts Local Plan Second Review April 2007. Amongst other things, these policies require development to be of a high quality design that complements the character of the local built environment and the existing pattern of street blocks, plots and buildings. The development would also conflict with the aims of the NPPF which seeks to reinforce local distinctiveness and avoid poor design.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR