
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 March 2018

by K Ford MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th April 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2810/W/17/3181531
19 Holdenby Road, Spratton NN6 8JD

- 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 Andrew Twigg against the decision of Daventry District Council.
 - The application Ref DA/2017/0294, dated 22 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 2 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appellant has suggested that the Council has changed their reason for refusal referring to the appearance of the character of the area in the decision notice and to the area immediately surrounding the site in their statement. As the area immediately surrounding the site forms part of the character and appearance of the area I do not consider this to be the case and have determined the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect on the character and appearance of the area
 - The principle of development in Spratton.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is the side garden land and location of a flat roof concrete garage within the curtilage of an end 2 storey terrace property in a block of 3 dwellings. Whilst there is some variety in the individual architectural style and appearance of the dwellings in the area, there is uniformity within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site in terms of the distance houses are set back from the road. Forming a linear pattern, the dwellings are set behind a deep grass verge, pathway and front gardens and driveways. This along with street trees and vegetated site boundaries creates an open and verdant character. The site is located adjacent to a private driveway, The Brambles,

which provides access to 4 dwellings which sit in a row behind the properties in Holdenby Road. Other examples of backland development exist within the road with the trend for properties in such instances to be grouped together within cul de sacs behind existing development and therefore not generally very visible from the road.

5. The scale, form and mass of the proposal would be in keeping with the immediate neighbouring properties. However, it would be notably set back from the existing building line compared to the nearest neighbours. The reason for this in terms of providing off street parking is acknowledged. However, in doing so the proposal would break up the strong uniformity of the building line and appear distinctly separate from the existing development. The proposal would be entirely visible from the road when standing in front of the property due to the uncharacteristically wider gap between No 19 and the nearest neighbour. Diminishing views further away from the site would do little to reduce the impact. Being linked neither to the dwellings on Holdenby Road, nor to the properties in The Brambles, the isolated appearance and visibility of the proposal would distinguish it as being different from other backland development in the area creating an incongruous addition out of keeping with that part of the street scene. As such it would not add interest or positively contribute to the variety that already exists within the road.
6. The appellant has cited the approval of 1a Orchard Close opposite the appeal site and other properties in that road which are orientated differently to the dwellings on Holdenby Road. However, I consider these to be different to the proposal in that they form a separate cul de sac off Holdenby Road and collectively create a different character and appearance to that of the main road from which the cul de sac is accessed.
7. Whilst the existing garage is somewhat dated in appearance and the new dwelling would provide a marginal improvement in the form of development on the site, this is outweighed by the harm to the character and appearance of the area that would result from the location of the proposal. It is this which distinguishes the scheme from the previous application considered at appeal¹. As such, the development would conflict with the parts of saved Policies GN2 and EN42 of the Daventry District Local Plan which supports development that is of a type, scale and design in keeping with the locality and where the design promotes or reinforces local distinctiveness and enhances the surroundings. It would also conflict with Policy H7 of the Village Design Statement which states that new development should reflect the current settlement street pattern and Policy HS2 of the Spratton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2029 (Neighbourhood Plan) which requires that residential development should reflect the character of the surrounding area.

Principle of Development

8. The Council has stated that the rural housing requirement identified in Policy S3 of the Core Strategy has been met and exceeded and as such new housing in rural areas should meet the policy tests of Policy R1 of the Core Strategy. Policy S3 says that about 2,360 dwellings would be required up to 2029 and as such is not specific, reflected in the fact that the figure had been exceeded by 520 dwellings as of April 2017. Notwithstanding the Council's view that at some point it has to be accepted that the number of dwelling has been exceeded, the

¹ APP/2810/W/16/3150113

approval of additional dwellings above the 2,360 does indicate that it is not a ceiling if appropriate development comes forward. Whilst I note the appellant's points about planning applications granted on other sites in the settlement subsequent to the case before me, I do not have sufficient information to draw meaningful comparisons and have based my assessment on the evidence.

9. There is some dispute between the parties as to whether the tests in Policy R1 have been met. I have been provided with limited information regarding the location of services and facilities in the settlement. This aside, I do not consider a single dwelling would make a meaningful contribution to the retention or improvement of the provision of the facilities in the village that I saw on my site visit. In addition, for the reasons identified, the proposal would not result in environmental improvements. Furthermore, I have not been provided with evidence of effective community involvement regarding the proposal or, in the absence of this that the proposal is a rural exceptions site or has been agreed through the adopted Neighbourhood Plan. Indeed the proposal would conflict with Policy HS2 of the Neighbourhood Plan as a consequence of the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area. Irrespective of the appellant's comments regarding the need for consultation and whether it has been required in the past, I do not consider the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan obviates the need for pre-application consultation, especially where the development is not included as an allocation within the document.
10. I note that the proposal would make a positive contribution to the housing land supply, providing a small sized property which is consequently likely to be more affordable and as such would provide choice and assist in meeting the housing needs identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the modest increase in provision would be outweighed by the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
11. The development as proposed would not adhere to the principle of development in Spratton. As such, it would conflict with Policy R1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which restricts housing development in rural areas in line with an identified criteria covering matters that include on site environmental improvements, development that supports the retention or improvement of essential local services, has been informed by an effective community involvement exercise or is a rural exception site or has been agreed through an adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has identified benefits of the proposal which include off road parking and no impact on the living conditions of neighbours. Such matters indicate a lack of harm in this regard rather than benefits and do not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
13. Reference has also been made to other Council decisions approved with less parking. I do not however have details of these proposals and in any event each case is determined on its own merits. I have assessed the merits of the case based on the information before me.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons identified, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Ford

INSPECTOR