The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 November 2018

by M Savage BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 November 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/H1840/W/18/3208074
Old Post House, Worcester Road, Drakes Broughton WR10 2AQ

- 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 Mike Green of Greenapple Construction (Worcester) Ltd against the decision of Wychavon District Council.
- The application Ref 18/00516/FUL, dated 13 March 2018, was refused by notice dated 5 July 2018.
- The development proposed is described as 'new build 2 bedroom bungalow to garden land at the rear of the Old Post House, with use of shared access to Stonebow Road'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council has referred to Policy DWWP1 of the Drakes Broughton and Wadborough with Pirton Neighbourhood Plan on their decision notice. This appears to be a typographical error, as the Officer's Report quotes policy DBWP1. Furthermore, this is accepted by the appellant who has made reference to it within their appeal statement. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of the rear garden of the Old Post House, a semi-detached dwelling which fronts onto Worcester Road and is within a settlement where infill development has been confirmed as acceptable in principle. The rear garden backs on to a footpath and playing fields beyond, characteristic of other properties along this part of Worcester Road. To the west of the appeal site is a recently constructed dormer bungalow which fronts onto Stonebow Road and to the south west are two newly constructed detached dwellings which front onto Worcester Road.

5. Whilst there is no dominant vernacular, dwelling type or plot size in the area, residential development generally is in linear form and fronts onto the highway.

The access to the appeal site would be via Stonebow Road, shared with the dormer bungalow and the rear access of the detached dwellings.

6. The proposed dwelling would be set behind the dormer bungalow at an angle and would be of a similar plot size. Whilst there would be no harm to the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties from overlooking it would not relate well to the adjacent dwellings due to its orientation and position to the rear. Although the proposed development would be adjacent to other new development and sufficient garden space would be provided, its proximity to the host dwelling and dormer bungalow would give a sense of enclosure, uncharacteristic of the area.

7. The proposed dwelling would be visible from Stonebow Road, which provides the main access to the settlement from the south and was well used during my site visit. Despite its single storey design and the existing landscaping, the proposed dwelling would contribute negatively to the street scene and would appear incongruous with the adjacent properties, which all have frontages with the highway.

8. Thus, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and be contrary to Policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016) which states that development proposals must complement the character of the area. In particular, the policy states that development should respond to surrounding buildings and the distinctive features or qualities that contribute to the visual and heritage interest of the townscape, frontages, streets and landscape quality of the local area.

9. It would also be contrary to Policy DBWP1 of the Drakes Broughton and Wadborough with Pirton Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2030[1], which states that proposals for new housing within the development boundary for Drakes Broughton will be supported where they do not lead to the inappropriate development of residential gardens that would cause harm to the village by reason of over-development. I consider the dwelling's proximity to surrounding buildings would result in such over-development

10. The host dwelling would retain a useable garden space, as required by the South Worcestershire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document Overarching Design Principles (2018) and off-street parking would be unaffected. Nevertheless, the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area by reason of its lack of highway frontage and enclosed nature which are both uncharacteristic of the area.

11. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of examples of what they state is backland development. I saw these other examples at my site visit but they do not affect the context of the appeal site and so are not directly comparable. In addition the layout of the development on the south side of Worcester Road would be very different in nature to the single dwelling in this case. Furthermore, each case must be decided on its own merits.

Other Matters

12. The appellant has made reference to the demand for smaller properties and housing suitable for the needs of older people. Whilst I have no specific

[1] Adopted April 2017

evidence of this, the small contribution of one dwelling to the local supply is outweighed by the harm I have identified above.

13. Whilst the Council raised no concern regarding the appearance of the dwelling, access and highway safety, drainage, landscaping, ecology or energy efficiency, this does not lend any positive weight to the proposal as this would be expected of any proposal.

14. I acknowledge the modest economic and social contribution that the proposal would make. However, this would be outweighed by the harm I have identified and the proposal would therefore not accord with the overall aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (2018).

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

M Savage

INSPECTOR