



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 May 2019

by Tim Crouch DipUD MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Tuesday, 09 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2260/W/18/3218508

Land Adjacent 118A, Monkton Road, Minster, Ramsgate

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr R & A Noel of Citi Nests and Mr DJ and Ms SA Fuller against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application Ref OL/TH/18/1163, dated 14 August 2018, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2018.
 - The development proposed is "outline application for 5 detached self-build units with associated parking".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr R & A Noel of Citi Nests and Mr DJ and Ms SA Fuller against Thanet District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matters

3. The proposal is in outline form. This originally had only Access as a detailed matter to be considered, with Landscape being added during the course of the application. I have therefore considered the appeal on the basis of both of these matters. I have considered any details of other Reserved Matters, including the layout within the Site Plan, as illustrative.
4. The Council's decision notice references Policy CC6 of the Thanet Local Plan (2006). However, CC6 was not saved when the policies were reviewed and it does not form part of the development plan.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The proposal lies outside the urban confines of Minster, located between the settlement and neighbouring Monkton to the west. It forms part of an arable field, fronting Monkton Road, and set opposite a field to the north.

7. The proposal would be set along the substantial road frontage of an existing field, extending the built form along Monkton Road further towards the west. The field is visible along the road, with only partial hedging and tree cover on the boundary. This, in combination with the openness opposite, contributes significantly to the local large scale and open landscape character. It provides long views to the south from this straight, rural lane, as identified as key qualities in Thanet District Council Landscape Character Assessment (2017) (LCA) for this character area.
8. Whilst there would be varying visibility from, and in, wider views, the proposal would obscure much of the key qualities of the landscape when travelling along Monkton Road given its extent across the existing open field. This would be despite the substantial planting proposed to screen the buildings. It would also contribute to the built form along the road, reducing the gap to the enclosed landscape to the west and the sense of openness between settlements, another characteristic in the LCA. This would be to the significant detriment of the character of the area. The two storey buildings would also be visible from the public right of way to the south of the proposal, changing the character of the open, rural views to the north. It would further change the rectilinear relationship of the fields either side of the road, introducing a strong boundary feature between them, harmfully at odds with the wider character.
9. The existing dwellings fronting Monkton Road have consistent rear boundaries, creating a strong linear boundary with the countryside to the south and rectilinear plots running parallel to the road. The proposal would diverge from this, with the rear boundary angled and further extending into the countryside, including behind existing dwellings. This would exacerbate the harmful effect of the built form on the open nature of the landscape and at be odds with the established strong character of buildings on the southern side of the road.
10. These existing dwellings also access Monkton Road directly, with limited front gardens. The proposal would have a single access, removing a number of trees, with substantial properties set back from the road. Whilst layout is not a matter for detailed consideration, the proposed access would constrain the resultant arrangement to a form harmfully at odds with this frontage character by requiring accommodation of vehicular turning and creating a depth of development. I am not convinced that an acceptable scheme could be advanced at Reserved Matters stage to reflect this frontage character.
11. Therefore, due to the location, scale and access, the proposal would be harmful to the character of the area. Consequently, it would be contrary to policies CC1, CC2 and D1 of the Thanet Local Plan (2006) (LP) and paragraphs 8, 127, 130 and 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework). These, taken together and amongst other objectives, require development to not damage the setting of the landscape, to protect the natural environment, add to the overall quality of the area and to protect valued landscapes.
12. The Council states that it cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites against their local housing need. Therefore paragraph 11 d (ii) of the Framework applies; namely that planning 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 Framework taken as a whole.

13. The proposal would contribute to the required local housing supply and offer an opportunity for self-build homes in the important family home sector. It would also offer choice and opportunity in the market for new homes, with a boost for the local economy during, and post, construction. However, these would be modest benefits given the scale of development and the harm to the character and appearance of the area would be significant and long lasting. Therefore, the adverse impacts of granting permission for the scheme as proposed would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in this case.
14. Overall, taking account of the Framework and the benefits of the development and all other matters raised, I find that material considerations do not indicate that planning permission should be granted for the development, which is in conflict with the development plan.

Other Matters

15. The site is within 6 kilometres of Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Areas and Wetlands of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention. Had I been minded to allow the appeal, I may have requested further information from the parties, as it may have been necessary for me to undertake an Appropriate Assessment and if necessary satisfy myself that any identified mitigation measures would be delivered in an effective and timely manner. However, as I am dismissing the appeal on other grounds, I need not consider this matter further.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tim Crouch

INSPECTOR