



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 July 2019

by Paul Cooper MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/T2405/W/19/3224459

The Copse, Desford Road, Thurlaston Village, Thurlaston LE9 7TE

- 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 James Abraham against the decision of Blaby District Council.
 - The application Ref 18/0690/FUL, dated 4 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 31 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of 7 detached dwellings with associated garages and creation of a new vehicular access from Desford Road.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development was amended during the lifespan of the planning application. The description in the banner above is taken from the Council's Decision Notice and was agreed with the applicant.
3. The Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) Development Plan Document was adopted in February 2019. This replaced the saved policies of the 1999 Local Plan. Both parties have taken this into consideration in their submissions.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this case are:
 - whether the proposals would represent sustainable development in respect of its location; and
 - the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Locational sustainability

5. From the evidence in front of me, I understand that the site has a countryside allocation, identified on the Policies Map of the Blaby District Local Plan (Delivery) Development Plan Document (2019) and is separate from the main village of Thurlaston. The proposal is for seven dwellings, of various sizes and designs. The existing access would be closed, and a new access taken from Desford Road.
6. Policy CS5 of the Blaby District Local Plan (Core Strategy) Development Plan Document (2013) (The CS) sets out the hierarchy for supporting new development in the most appropriate locations. Thurlaston is toward the

bottom of that hierarchy, grouped with a number of other smaller villages. From the evidence in front of me, it would appear that the housing requirement for those villages has been met, although this is a minimum figure. The Core Strategy states that these villages have a limited range of employment opportunities, services and facilities, and generally not well served by public transport.

7. From the information in front of me, and from my site visit, it is apparent that local services are extremely limited, which would increase reliance on private vehicles to access day to day services and employment options. This is contrary to Policy CS5 of the CS as well as Paragraphs 102 and 103 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which states that planning should actively manage patterns of growth in support of the objective to promote walking, cycling and the use of public transport. Sustainable transport solutions can vary significantly between urban and rural areas, but from the evidence before me, it seems that there are very limited services that could be accessible from the site by sustainable transport means.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposals would not represent sustainable development in respect of their location and would conflict with Policy CS5 of the CS and the sustainability aims of the Framework.

Character and appearance

9. The appeal site is generally well screened by existing vegetation but is physically separated from the existing village. I find that the separation would make the proposals difficult to integrate into the wider area. Policy CS2 of the CS states that development should improve the character and quality of an area, be socially inclusive and have good connectivity.
10. The proposals would effectively create a secondary hamlet to the village, which would limit the inclusivity of the development and be at odds with the guidance set out in Policy CS2 of the CS.
11. However, I find that the design and layout of the proposals would be of a positive nature that would complement the existing village and allow a wider range of property types for the village and the wider area. The screening of the site further reduces the overall effect of the development, and even with the difference in coverage in winter months, this would not have a significantly negative effect on the character and appearance of the area when the site, if developed, would come into more general view. I find that the positives that could be brought by the development in terms of design and appearance would outweigh the negativity of the restricted lack of social inclusion.
12. For the reasons above I conclude that that the proposal would not be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be consistent with the general aims of Policies CS2 and CS18 of the CD. This requires, amongst other things, that development is of high-quality design which respects distinctive local character and is in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and would not have an adverse effect on the appearance or character of the landscape.

Other Matters

13. I accept that the proposal would provide a modest social benefit arising from the added supply and mix of housing and there would be some limited economic benefits associated with the creation of employment during the construction period.
14. Notwithstanding the above, in relation to the two main issues, I find that the conflict with Policy CS5 of the CS in relation to the locational sustainability of the proposals outweighs the positive aspects of the development that would not cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

15. Therefore, for the reasons above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Paul Cooper

INSPECTOR