



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 07 May 2019

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/H2835/W/19/3222810

31 Edward Road, Irchester, Wellingborough NN29 7BN

- 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 Bill Groome against the decision of Wellingborough Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WP/18/00688/FUL, dated 05 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2019
 - The development proposed is erection of 1 no. bungalow with associated garden area and parking
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, whether the scheme provides adequate living conditions for future occupiers of the development and whether the scheme would have a detrimental impact on highway safety with particular regard to provision of adequate vehicle and cycle parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a semi-detached house and its associated garden. It is situated on the corner of Edward Road and James Street. The ground level at the front of the site is lower than the ground level at the rear of the site. The houses on both Edward Road and James Street are of a similar type, design and scale. The properties along both Edward Street and James Street observe a clear building line and feature generous gardens to the rear, creating a sense of spaciousness and reinforcing the area's uniformity. The predominant character is one of uniformity, spaciousness and simplicity in design.
4. The appeal scheme is to subdivide the rear garden of the host dwelling and erect a one bedroom bungalow behind the host dwelling, fronting James Street. Whilst there are other bungalows in the wider area, including within infill plots, the immediate site context has a strong uniformity which does not feature bungalows. The scheme is modest in scale and simple in design, but as a single storey bungalow it would be wholly discordant with the uniform type, scale and design of the surrounding dwellings which characterise the area. As a result,

the scheme would disrupt the uniformity of the immediate area and would appear incongruous.

5. Moreover, the scheme would also disrupt the building line by subdividing a rear garden and introducing built development into an otherwise open area of rear gardens. Due to the topography and openness on James Street, the sense of openness created by the rear gardens of Edward Street is visible and appreciable. The appeal scheme would disrupt this and would not respect the pattern and grain of development in the area which contributes to the spacious and uniform character. Due to the small areas of garden surrounding both the host dwelling and the bungalow, the scheme would appear cramped and overdeveloped in contrast to its surroundings.
6. For the reasons given above the scheme does not represent innovative design which would raise the quality of the area and does not respect the form and layout of the surroundings. The scheme would not respect or enhance the local character and would conflict with Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (NNJCS), which seeks, amongst other things, design which responds to the site's immediate local character, local topography and the form and character of the area.

Living conditions

7. Policy 30 of the NNJCS requires that residential development complies with the Nationally Described Space Standards (NDSS). There is some disagreement between the parties as to the actual Gross Internal Area (GIA) of the proposed bungalow. However, parties agree that the overall size of the bungalow would fail to meet the overall size standard. The scheme would therefore conflict with Policy 30 of the NNJCS.
8. The Appellant asserts that a 1.1 metre shortfall would amount to very little space when spread across the development as a whole and the bedroom complies with the space standard for bedrooms. Whilst it might be the case that 1.1 metres would amount to little additional space as an incremental addition to each of the rooms of the development, it would amount to a significant additional space if added to a single room within the bungalow. Moreover, the NDSS represent minimum standards in order to ensure adequate standards of living conditions for occupants and non-compliance with the standard is not justified simply by virtue of its being by a small amount.
9. The layout of the scheme and topography would result in both the host dwelling and bungalow having very shallow, wide gardens. For the host dwelling, the outlook and function of the garden would be limited by the requirement for both a retaining wall to create a useable space and a fence above to provide privacy to the bungalow garden. The Appellant highlights that the existing ground level already creates a necessity for retaining features which, along with boundary fencing create high boundary features which are only 0.8 metres lower than proposed. However, the depth of the garden to the host dwelling would be greatly reduced, meaning high boundary features would be much closer to the rear elevation and would serve to enclose the small narrow private outdoor space for the dwelling, resulting in an overbearing impact. As a result, the appeal scheme would result in a poor quality of outdoor amenity space for the host dwelling.

10. The Appellant has stated that due to ground levels, much of the existing outdoor space for the host dwelling is unusable and is laid to hardstanding. However, there is no evidence before me to suggest the garden area is unusable and could not be otherwise terraced or landscaped. The existing arrangement of the garden would therefore not justify its loss as outdoor space for the host dwelling.
11. The Appellant contends that potential future occupiers of the bungalow are likely to desire a small and manageable garden. Whilst there is no proposal to restrict the use of the bungalow to those with particular needs for a smaller space, the bungalow would not be suitable for a family as it would only provide one double bedroom. As such, less outdoor space may be required and the proposed space would be suitable on this basis.
12. For the reasons above, the appeal scheme would not provide adequate living conditions for future occupiers and would be contrary to Policy 30 of the NNJDS and Policy 8 of the NNJCS which seeks to protect amenity for existing and future occupiers.

Parking and Access

13. Policy 8 of the NNJCS resists development which would prejudice highway safety. The County Council has adopted parking standards, which require one vehicle space plus one covered cycle space for a one bedroom dwelling, and three vehicle spaces plus one covered cycle space for the four bedroom host dwelling.
14. The parties agree that there is scope for the provision of covered cycle parking and I am satisfied that this could have been secured by a planning condition should planning permission have been granted.
15. The proposal does not comply with the County Council requirements in respect of the host dwelling, by offering only two vehicle spaces via a shared access. The standards also note that tandem parking, which is the arrangement for both the bungalow and host dwelling, is inconvenient, though it does not preclude such arrangements.
16. Whilst the proposal does not comply with the adopted standards, it would result in an increase in car parking for the host dwelling, albeit by a tandem arrangement. The length of the tandem space falls short of that set out in the adopted standards for two vehicles, however, it would nonetheless provide more parking than the previous arrangement. Furthermore, the area has unrestricted on street parking.
17. The evidence before me does not suggest the appeal scheme would result in detriment to highway safety, given that it would represent an improvement on the existing parking arrangement. For these reasons, whilst the proposal does not comply with the County Council's parking standards, there is no evidence before me to suggest the scheme would result in a detriment to highway safety in conflict with the aims of Policy 8 of the NNJCS.

Other Matters

18. The Council's reasons for refusal refer to Policy 1 of the Irchester, Knutson and Little Irchester Neighbourhood Plan. This policy relates to settlement boundaries as part of a wider spatial strategy. There is no dispute between the

parties that the site is within the settlement boundaries of Irchester and as such, whilst I have had regard to this policy I have not found the scheme to be in conflict with it.

Conclusion

19. For the reasons stated above, I find that the appeal proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area and would fail to provide an adequate standard of living conditions for occupiers of the development. The scheme would therefore conflict with Policies 8 and 30 of the NNJCS, as well as the guidance in the Framework. I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR