



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 June 2019

by S Edwards MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/19/3222036

Clyde Cottage, The Common, Winterslow, Wiltshire SP5 1PJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Elkins against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 18/09960/FUL, dated 15 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 11 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is described as proposed 1no 2 bedroom house, proposed 1no 3 bedroom house and associated parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which was revised in July 2018, was subsequently updated on 19 February 2019. References to the Framework within this decision relate to the latest version published in 2019.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - Whether the proposal would provide satisfactory living conditions for future occupiers, having particular regard to the size of the internal accommodation and outdoor space; and
 - The effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Situated to the side of Clyde Cottage, the appeal site forms a corner plot located prominently at the junction between The Common and Witt Road, which comprises a number of outbuildings. The area is predominantly residential in character, and includes properties of different types and sizes, such as bungalows, semi-detached and detached dwellings. Properties are typically set back from the road frontage, behind front gardens which in many cases also provide off road parking. The surrounding landscape and open fields give this area a pleasant semi-rural feel, and corner plots such as the appeal site add to the spacious and open character which defines this area.

5. The proposal would result in an intensification of development on what constitutes a modest-sized plot, having particular regard to the erection of two dwellinghouses. The level of development proposed would erode the contribution which the appeal site currently makes to the spacious and open character of the area. The harm caused to the character and appearance of the locality would be exacerbated by the removal of a substantial part of the existing hedge and the formation of a large hardstanding area for access and parking. The creation of a shared driveway would lead to an urbanisation of the plot, which would appear out-of-kilter with the semi-rural character of its surroundings.
6. It is suggested that the proposal would be in keeping with the character of other dwellings recently built in the surroundings. However, I have not been referred to any properties in particular, or the details of the circumstances that led to these proposals being accepted, and therefore cannot be certain that they constitute a direct parallel to the appeal scheme. In any event, I am required to assess the proposal before me on its individual merits.
7. I note that outline permission was previously granted on this site for the erection of a two-bedroom dwelling and alterations to the existing access¹, but it has since lapsed. This particular application was a less intensive form of development, which was approved prior to the adoption of the WCS and the publication of the Framework. It is therefore of limited relevance to the appeal proposal.
8. For the foregoing reasons, I conclude that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. It would subsequently conflict with Core Policy 57 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (WCS) – adopted January 2015, which requires a high standard of design for new developments, notably by enhancing local distinctiveness and responding positively to the existing townscape and landscape features.

Living conditions for future occupiers

9. The proposed dwellings would both be modest in size and compact in their internal arrangement, particularly as these dwellings would in all likelihood be occupied by families. Open plan kitchen and living areas are not unusual, but in this particular instance, the area occupied by these two functions would be constrained. Several of the bedrooms would also appear particularly small, with limited circulation space.
10. The site coverage of the new buildings and the car parking areas to the front would leave very limited space to provide usable amenity areas, having regard to the size of the gardens, but also their tapered nature. The size of the gardens would be wholly inadequate for two- and three-bedroom family dwellings. Whilst it is argued that the small size of the gardens may appeal to some people, I consider that this is not a valid reason to allow a development that would result in harm.
11. I therefore consider that the appeal scheme would not provide satisfactory living conditions for the intended occupiers of the proposed dwellings, having particular regard to the provision of the size of the internal accommodation and outdoor space. It would therefore not accord with Core Policy 57 of the WCS

¹ Local Planning Authority Reference S/2007/0701.

and paragraph 127 of the Framework, both of which notably seek to ensure that new developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Highway safety

12. There is a car parking area to the front of Clyde Cottage and the appeal site benefits from a vehicular access within proximity to the junction between The Common and Witt Road, which would be widened as part of the proposal. The construction of two additional dwellings would result in an intensification of the existing access.
13. The proposal would include the provision of four car parking spaces for the new dwellings, thus according with the Council's parking standards. However, by reason of the restricted size of the forecourt area, protracted manoeuvres would be required to enable vehicles to leave the site in a forward gear. For convenience purposes, future occupiers would be more likely to reverse onto Witt Road or The Common. In the absence of evidence to the contrary, I am therefore unable to conclude that the proposal would make adequate arrangements for the provision of car parking.
14. For the foregoing reasons, I conclude that the proposal would result in an intensification of the existing access and lack adequate visibility, thus increasing the risk of dangerous manoeuvres occurring onto Witt Road and The Common and the risk of collisions with all road users, which would be detrimental to highway safety in this area. It would subsequently conflict with the design aims of Core Policy 57 of the WCS. By failing to provide safe and suitable access to the site, the scheme would also not accord with paragraph 108 of the Framework.
15. I however find no conflict with Core Policy 64 of the WCS, which seeks to reduce the reliance on the car and encourage the use of sustainable transport alternatives.

Other Matters

16. Various concerns have been raised by interested parties, notably in respect of the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, which I have noted. However, as this appeal is being dismissed on other grounds, it is not necessary for me to consider these matters further.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR