
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 September 2019

by J Williamson BSc (Hons) MPlan MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/W/19/3232946
82 Winston Crescent, Brackley, NN13 7DZ

- 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 S Harding against the decision of South Northamptonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2018/2576/FUL, dated 10 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 11 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is single dwelling with associated internal and external works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. In February 2019, following the Council's decision, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised. The parties have had the opportunity of commenting on the implications for the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupants, with regard to the provision of private amenity space; and
 - the effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance of the area

4. The site comprises a strip of land adjacent to 82 Winston Crescent. I note the appellant considers the land to be garden and not public amenity land. Regardless of its use, the site comprises a grassed area, approximately 6 m wide running the depth of the plot. It is located between the flank elevation and side boundary wall of No 82 and the pavement.
5. The housing estate has similar grassed areas located to the side and/or front of properties. These create spaces between and around the buildings, giving rise to an open feel. The grassed areas are a distinctive characteristic of the estate, and they contribute positively to its quality of environment. The proposed

dwelling would materially reduce the sense of space and thereby have a detrimental impact on the character and appearance of the area.

6. I note the appellant has planning permission for a two-storey side extension at No 82. However, this would be narrower than the proposed dwelling and therefore not as much of the open grassed area would be lost. Furthermore, the approved extension would have different fenestration to the proposed dwelling and, in contrast to the proposed dwelling, it would be read as a subservient extension to the existing dwelling. I consider an additional dwelling, of the size proposed and as described below, would have a different appearance to the approved extension.
7. The proposed dwelling would be narrower and shallower than the other dwellings within the terrace. Its ridge line and the rear roof slope would be lower than those of the terrace. In comparison with the existing dwellings, the proposal would have fewer and smaller window openings and they would not be as uniformly positioned. Consequently, I consider the proposal would disrupt the consistency of the terrace due to the size, roof ridge line, rear roof slope, window sizes and their positioning.
8. The chamfered boundary treatment to the rear garden and the provision of the car parking space outside the rear garden area would detract from the street scene. This adds to my overall conclusion that the proposed development would be a discordant feature at the end of the existing terrace in a prominent position, publicly visible from some distance along Churchill Way.
9. Due to the factors outlined above, the proposal would not accord with saved policies G3 and EV1 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan (1997) (LP), policies SA and H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (2014) (JCS), or paragraph 127 of the Framework, which collectively, and amongst other things, seek to ensure new development has regard to the particular characteristics, landscape features, scale, siting and design of existing development and is sympathetic to local character.

Living conditions of future occupiers

10. The proposal is a 1-bedroom unit of a size I consider could be inhabited by 2 people. The proposed rear garden space would be materially smaller than that of the other dwellings in the terrace, less than half the size. However, the other properties have 2 bedrooms, which allow for more occupants. I consider the outdoor space would be of a sufficient size to meet the day-to-day uses of such a facility by future occupants, eg outdoor sitting area, space for a barbeque, laundry drying and cycle storage.
11. The Council has expressed concerns regarding the potential for the future occupants of No 82 to exercise their permitted development rights, thereby harming the quality of the proposed rear garden space for the new dwelling. However, the proposal must be assessed on its merits within the current circumstances, and not based on what the circumstances may be in the future.
12. Policy H1 of the JCS seeks to ensure new developments make the most efficient use of land having regard to, amongst other things, the living conditions of future occupiers. Para 4.74 of the Council's Design Guide advises that relative garden sizes should be considered in respect of infill development or residential extensions. Paragraph 127 of the Framework requires high

standards of amenity to be provided for future occupiers. I consider the proposal would be an efficient use of the land and I am satisfied that regard has been had to the living conditions of future occupiers, taking account of neighbouring garden sizes. The amenities of future occupiers in respect of outdoor space would be adequately provided for. As such the proposal accords with Policy H1 of the JCS and guidance within the Framework and the Council's Design Guide.

Highway safety

13. The proposal includes one on-site parking space to the rear of the property. I note the Council's concerns regarding increased pressure for on-street parking in the area. However, given the size of the property proposed I consider that the provision of one on-site parking space would be adequate. Furthermore, should any additional on-street parking occur as a result of the development, this would not be of a scale that would hinder the flow of traffic on the surrounding highway network to an extent that would threaten highway safety.
14. LP Policy G3 supports new development that, amongst other things, provides a satisfactory means of access, parking and turning facilities and does not unduly affect the existing transport network. I consider that the proposal would provide such facilities and that it would not unduly affect the safe and efficient operation of the surrounding highway network. As such the proposal accords with LP Policy G3. I note the guidance in the Supplementary Planning Document Parking: Standards & Design (2018), which recommends 2 on-site spaces for dwellings with 1-3 bedrooms. However, I also note that the Local Highway Authority did not raise any objections to the proposal. Furthermore, paragraph 109 of the Framework advises that development should only be refused on highway grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe. I have concluded that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety, nor would it lead to a severe impact on the road network.

Other Matters

15. The appellant has pointed out that new residential development in built-up areas is supported by planning policies. However, this consideration does not outweigh the substantive harm I have identified.

Conclusion

16. Notwithstanding my conclusions regarding living conditions for future occupiers and highway safety, I find the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area, and for this reason the appeal is dismissed.

J Williamson
INSPECTOR