
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 November 2019

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/19/3228702
17 Shelley Road, High Wycombe HP11 2UP

- 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 Saf Dad against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/05238/FUL, dated 30 January 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'demolition of existing dwelling and construction of 2 x 3-bed semi-detached dwellings'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. Since the Council determined the application, I note that a new local plan has been adopted. The Council has been invited to clarify the most relevant development plan policies to the determination of this appeal. No comments have been received. Therefore, I have given both parties opportunity to comment on what I consider to be the most relevant development plan policies submitted in evidence. I have only received a response from the appellant, and this raises no new arguments or concerns with my approach. As such I have proceeded to determine the appeal on that basis.

Main issue

3. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Shelley Road is a spacious, residential street characterised by detached housing. The housing is set-back within its own plot, providing frontage parking and gardens, with private and enclosed amenity spaces to the rear. The Carver Hill and Wordsworth Road street scenes form part of the wider context. They exhibit similar suburban characteristics and include some additional house types.
5. Whilst these twentieth century houses in Shelley Road have undergone alterations and extensions their essential character has been retained. In addition to the siting and detached nature of the houses, a significant contributing factor to the character and appearance of the area is the use of a small number of house types, set within clusters. These factors combine to provide a high degree of uniformity and rhythm within the street scene.

6. 17 Shelley Road is positioned at the end of a group of 2-storey detached houses with bay frontages, hipped roofs and similar materials and proportions. They have a high degree of homogeneity. Due to the topography, when approaching from the south-east, each house within this row is elevated above the preceding one. Immediately to the north-west of No 17 is a public footpath and access road. Consequently, the site as a slightly irregular shape tapering to the rear. However, where the existing dwelling is sited, it has a comparable width to nearby plots. Further to the north-west, rising up the hill, are two gable fronted bungalows and then a row of detached gable sided houses. The flow of the built form appears considered and well-designed, neatly addressing the topography, footpath and gap of the access road.
7. The proposal would introduce a pair of semi-detached dwellings into the street scene. They would occupy much of the width of the plot at full 2-storey level, appearing quite legibly, due to the principle elevations and frontage layout, as two houses. They would have flush façades with no subtlety or variation and be greater in height than the existing built form. As such, the proposal would be an incongruous and solitary typology, strikingly at odds with the uniformity and rhythm of the street scene.
8. Furthermore, the proposal would appear as a dense development that fails to maintain the spacious quality of the area. The design, including additional height, fails to successfully address the local topography and adjacent gap in the built form. Due to the presence of the footpath and access road, the north-west elevation is more visible. This proposed elevation would be higher and closer to the boundary than the existing, and would appear conspicuously as a large, blank mass.
9. In support of their proposals, the appellant has highlighted previous householder planning approvals. I do not have full details and furthermore I note that none are extant. Given the evidence before me, I consider this planning history of limited relevance in the context of this specific proposal. Furthermore, they highlight the use of a hipped roof, roof pitch and palette of materials to complement the existing properties in the area. However, I do not find that these details mitigate the harm that I have found. Additionally, I consider that the provision of policy/guidance compliant parking, bin storage, cycle storage, space standards and accessibility requirements to be broadly neutral considerations in any planning balance.
10. Therefore, I conclude on the main issue that the proposal does not reflect good quality design and would be out of keeping with, and harmful to, the character and appearance of the area. As such, the proposal would not accord with Policies C9 and DM35 of the Wycombe District Local Plan – Adopted August 2019, the Wycombe Residential Design Guidance – Adopted June 2017, and the Wycombe District Council Housing Intensification Supplementary Planning Document – Adopted October 2011 which amongst other aims seek to achieve high-quality design. Furthermore, the proposal would not accord with the design objectives at section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

James Taylor

INSPECTOR