

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 November 2019

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3940/W/19/3234138

4 New Road, Purton SN5 4HF

- 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 John Grisley against the decision of Wiltshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/03621/FUL, dated 4 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as '*garage and annex above for the enjoyment of relatives and friends on a temporary basis*'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - whether or not the proposal represents ancillary accommodation or a new separate residential unit; and, if it represents the latter,
 - whether or not the proposal would provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the accessibility of services and facilities; and,
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether or not a separate residential unit

3. No 4 New Road is a detached five-bedroom two storey dwelling, and its outbuildings, set in well sized linear grounds which run along the public highway, which is to the south. The highway, in turn, runs parallel to the mainline railway. Housing in the area is mixed in style and period. The proposal seeks to erect a detached garage with ancillary accommodation above, located at the west end of the site.
4. The accommodation would have a dedicated access door to the rear and contain a bedroom, living room, kitchen and a shower/toilet room. Externally, individual parking, access and hardstanding would be provided. As such, it would enjoy all the facilities required for independent living. It would be at such a distance from No 4 that the land could be easily subdivided with adequate garden, parking and turning space provided for both resultant sites.
5. Given these circumstances, whilst I am mindful of the intended use of the proposal as per the description of development, it seems to me that the long-term occupation of the building as an annex would be unrealistic to such a degree that the inevitable effect of any permission would be to create a new

planning unit. I therefore find that limiting the use of the accommodation by means of condition would not be reasonable and would not meet the tests for such set out within the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the Planning Practice Guidance.

Suitability of location

6. As I have concluded that the proposal would in effect represent the creation of a separate residential unit, it follows to be considered if such a proposal in this location would be acceptable.
7. Policies CP1 and CP2 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted 2015) (CS) set out the Council's strategic approach to its housing delivery, directing development to settlements and only permitting development in the countryside under certain circumstances. These are set out within Policy C48 of the CS and Policy H4 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan (adopted 2001) (NWLP).
8. The appellant holds the reasonable opinion that, as the site lies amongst housing on the outskirts of Purton, which is to the south, it falls within the settlement. It is also held that the scheme would meet the tests for infill development set out within Policy CP2.
9. However, the extent of the settlement is defined in planning terms by its settlement boundary, which terminates on the opposite side of the railway. As such, for planning purposes the appeal site is within the countryside. It follows that the aforementioned tests set out within Policy CP2 do not apply to this case. On the evidence before me, the proposal would also not meet any of the circumstances set out within Policy C48 of the CS or Policy H4 of the NWLP.
10. Furthermore, the various services and facilities in the centre of Purton are a considerable distance of approximately 1km away. Access to them requires crossing the railway at the nearby road bridge, which is narrow, confined and bereft of dedicated footpaths or street lighting. Given these constraints, the route into the settlement would not provide a safe or appealing route for those on foot, particularly the elderly or people with children.
11. Reference is made to the No 53 bus service, which stops at the end of New Road before reaching Purton, but, on the Council's evidence, the frequency of this service is significantly limited. Employment providers are listed by the appellant, but it seems to me that all would require access by private motorcar. Consequently, occupants of the proposal would likely be dependent on private transport to access what is needed for day to day living.
12. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposed development would not provide a suitable location for housing, having regard to the accessibility of services and facilities. It would conflict with the relevant aims of Policies CP1, CP2, CP48 and C60 of the CS, Policy H4 NWLP and the Framework.

Character and appearance

13. Although New Road is fronted by housing for a great deal of its length, its peripheral location in relation to Purton provides, overall, a rural and loose knit feel. This is particularly illustrated by the appeal site, which acts as a break in the otherwise near continuous built form on the north side of the highway.

14. The proposed development would significantly reduce the strength of this gap as a feature in the street scene and would effectively create a near unbroken ribbon of development stretching around 500m along New Road. Although I acknowledge that the aesthetic design merits of the proposal would be compatible with the varietal style of housing within New Road, this would not overcome the harm I have identified through the loss of rurality in this location.
15. I therefore conclude on this issue that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with the design aims of Policies CS51 and CS57 of the CS and the Framework.

Other Matters

16. The appellant has referred to a high demand for housing in this area. However, no local need has been established, and this matter has therefore carried very limited weight in favour of the scheme.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

17. The government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and the provision of a single dwelling would add to local supply and deliver social and economic benefits. However, these benefits would be modest and outweighed by the unsuitability of the location, the inaccessibility to services and facilities, and the harm to the character and appearance of the area.
18. I therefore find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole. There are no other considerations, including the Framework, which outweigh this conflict.
19. Taking all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR