



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2019 by Mariam Noorgat BSc (Hons)

Decision by P J Davies BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G2245/W/19/3237454

Woodley, Larks Field, Hartley DA3 7EJ

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Simon Bolaji against the decision of Sevenoaks District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01358/FUL dated 3 May 2019 was refused by notice dated 26 July 2019.
 - The proposed development is a replacement dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Procedural Matter

3. I note that some construction work has taken place on site. For the avoidance of doubt, I have assessed the proposal on the plans that the Council's decision was based upon.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located on the south side of Larks Field and is situated within an established residential area. It is not disputed that the principle of the development would be acceptable in this location and that the proposal would be an efficient use of land. Nonetheless, these factors should be balanced with all material considerations having regard to the development plan, which in this case includes the Sevenoaks District Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy, Development Plan Document, Adopted 22 February 2011 ('the Core Strategy') and the Allocations and Development Management Plan, Adopted February 2015 (ADMP). Core Strategy Policy SP 1 says that all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated. ADMP Policy EN1 has similar principles and stipulates a number of criteria including that

proposals respond to the scale and height of the area. These policies are consistent with the design objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework').

6. The properties in the surrounding area differ in architectural styles and scales, however the dwellings in the immediate context of the appeal site, specifically on both sides of the appeal site, are predominantly detached and semi-detached chalet style bungalows of similar heights, widths and depths. Some of these properties contain dormers and due to the generally low eaves level, the first-floor accommodation to these properties are not prominent. The pre-existing appeal property as shown in drawing Ref:D1, Rev A, would have also been set in considerably from the eastern boundary and its side eastern elevation would have been positioned similar to the building lines of the properties on the west of Gresham Avenue, providing for subservient views when approaching the appeal site from the south of this road. Whilst there is a general diversity to Hartley as a whole, the consistent scale of the dwellings and the predominantly low height of the prevailing built form are characteristic features of this section of Larks Field and provide a strong sense of local distinctiveness.
7. The significant increase in scale of the proposal by virtue of increased depth, width and height combined with a two storey property design that would have a higher eaves level and prominent first floor accommodation, would be at odds with the general design and mass of the properties within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site, even with a shallow roof pitch. The additional bulk at first floor level would be exacerbated by the proposal's close proximity to the eastern boundary which would dominate views when approaching from the south of Gresham Avenue. Relative to the low height development around the appeal site, the proposal would appear discordant. It would be a considerable deviation from the characteristic built form of its immediate vicinity on the south side of Larks Field and would appear as a disproportionate, bulky and incongruous form of development that fails to respond to the local character. Notwithstanding the benefits of using brownfield land and the very modest contribution that a replacement dwelling would make to housing supply these are compelling reasons for dismissing the appeal.
8. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to Core Strategy Policy SP1, ADMP Policy EN1 and the design objectives of the Framework.

Other Matters

9. The appellant refers to various developments that were permitted by the Council. Although I do not have full details of the circumstances that led to these decisions, the permissions for A and B, which are close to the appeal site, are for bungalows and therefore not comparable to the appeal proposal. The decisions for C and D relate to developments that are a considerable distance away from the appeal site and as such, there is a difference in the context associated to these properties which are not comparable to the appeal site. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.

Recommendation and Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Mariam Noorgat

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

P J Davies

INSPECTOR