
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 February 2020

by S. Rennie BSc (Hons), BA (Hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1265/W/19/3239804

Land adjacent No 538 Chickerell Road, Chickerell, Dorset DT3 4DL

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr James Donnelly (Weyfleet Ltd) against the decision of Dorset Council
 - The application Ref WD/D/18/002877, dated 10 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is for two dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeal seeks outline permission with all matters reserved. In so far as the submitted plans and drawings show details, I have treated those as being illustrative.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the development on (1) the character and appearance of the area, and (2) the living conditions of future occupiers of the proposed dwellings.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The site is at the edge of the settlement of the village of Chickerell. The site is a narrow strip between residential and agricultural land, with a single storey building at the end of the site furthest away from the road.
5. The proposal for two dwellings on this site follows a recent allowed appeal decision for a single dwelling reference APP/F1230/W/18/3193460. I have taken this decision into account with my considerations, but there are clear differences between the proposal now and that previously allowed.
6. The proposal is indicated to be the same approximate footprint as the previous allowed scheme, but the proposal is now shown to be a semi-detached pair of houses with two storeys rather than a bungalow. I recognise that the bungalow previously shown on the plans with the allowed appeal were indicative, but I know of no reason for the Inspector to consider that the intention would be for

a substantially different residential development with the subsequent reserved matters. Similarly, from the indicative plans, I have no reason to expect anything substantially different from that of a pair of semi-detached two storey dwellings for this appeal.

7. In terms of the impact to the wider landscape, the one-and-a-half storey dwellings as proposed would have more of a visual impact than a bungalow but would be seen against the backdrop of the edge of the village and other houses. As such, in this regard the proposal would have no discernible impact to the wider landscape including the importance of the nearby AONB.
8. Although the proposal would not have a building footprint much different from that given consent previously, this would be for two dwellings. As such, there would be two separate garden/outdoor amenity areas needed with more parking provision.
9. For the previous allowed scheme, the proposed dwelling had garden space to the front and rear and appeared sufficiently spacious within its plot. Due to the proposal being now for two houses, the overall plot and the garden areas are split. As such, the plots for each dwelling proposed including their garden areas would be significantly less than that indicated for the single dwelling on site with the previous appeal.
10. This plot would be part of the street scene of Chickerell Road/Chickerell Hill, where the access would be formed to serve the two dwellings. The new dwellings would be particularly visible within the context of this street scene. The character of the existing houses along Chickerell Road in the area of the site typically have spacious plots, with good size gardens, even if there is variety in terms of dwelling size and design. However, in proposing two dwellings onto this site, what would be seen as part of the street scene would be houses within very tight and restricted plots.
11. This is particularly the case for Unit 1, which would be the more prominent of the two dwellings as it fronts the road. Unit 1 would be evident as a house within a tight plot with only a relatively small garden area which would effectively be to the plot frontage, wedged between the joint parking spaces and the side of the house. Typically, the pattern of houses in the area would be for private gardens to the rear of the dwelling. To my mind, in the context of the street scene, the development would therefore appear cramped and overly-contrived within the plot.
12. The proposal is in outline, but it is not clear from the indicative drawings submitted how the dwellings could be developed within this restricted site without appearing cramped. Indeed, the Highway conditions advised would likely result in a more cramped plot, resulting a smaller space for the proposed houses and gardens. This may only be a relatively small change needed, but one that would exacerbate this issue.
13. I recognise that the modern housing development to the rear of the site has a more mixed size of plot and garden size, but the site visually relates more to the housing along Chickerell Road, which is typified by more spacious plots, especially on the sections of this road near the site. I recognise that there have also been some developments along Chickerell Road which have resulted in permission for housing on smaller plots with limited garden depths, but I do not have full details of these other cases to compare. In any event, it is still my

opinion that the plots along Chickerell Road/Hill are typically spacious and that particularly Unit 1 as proposed would appear very cramped when viewed within the street scene.

14. Therefore, whilst it has been concluded previously by an Inspector that a single dwelling could be provided on site, the provision of two dwellings on this narrow plot would be a cramped form of development.
15. To conclude, the proposal for a semi-detached pair of houses on this narrow plot would be a cramped and overly-contrived form of development, which would not reflect the residential character within this street. As such, the proposal would conflict with policy ENV12 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015), which require development, amongst other things, to complement and respect the character of the surrounding area.

Living Conditions

16. The matter of living conditions relates to future occupiers as a main issue, with the Council's reason for refusal not relating to neighbours to the site. A particular issue is the garden space for the proposed houses. I would regard there to be sufficiently spacious and private provision of garden from Unit 2, but as stated above, the garden for Unit 1 appears particularly small, being narrow and of limited depth. However, it is an area of garden that would likely provide sufficient amenity for use by future occupants of what is a modest sized house.
17. This garden space for Unit 1 would be between the parking area and the side of this proposed house. Therefore, the occupants of Unit 2 would likely park their cars adjacent to this space and walk around it to access their house, which would limit privacy. However, a high fence or other form of enclosure could address this, as the appellant has suggested.
18. Overall, whilst being an indication of a cramped form of development that would have a harmful impact to the character and appearance of the area, I would regard the gardens for the proposed dwellings to be satisfactory for the provision of outdoor amenity space for future occupiers. The proposal, in this regard, is in accordance with policies ENV12 and ENV16 of the West Dorset, Weymouth and Portland Local Plan (2015), which relate to future occupants' amenities, amongst other things.

Other Matters

19. The proposal would provide two additional dwellings towards local housing supply in a reasonably sustainable location, which would be an efficient use of the site in terms of density. The appellant also states that the dwellings with their final design would reflect the local vernacular and would be an improvement over the existing appearance of the site. There may also be some economic benefits through CIL payments or New Homes Bonus for example.
20. The appellant has suggested that the Council has previously not been able to demonstrate a sufficient housing land supply. I do not have detailed evidence of this. However, even if there was clear evidence to show that the Council could not demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits acknowledged above. Seen in the round this would not be sustainable development.

Conclusion

21. Due to the harmful impact to the character and appearance of the area, the appeal should be dismissed.

S. Rennie

INSPECTOR