



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 March 2020 by Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA

Decision by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPL MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 April 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/G2815/W/19/3243203

107 Wood Road, Kings Cliffe PE8 6XR

- 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 Mark Tilley against the decision of East Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00902/FUL, dated 21 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is part demolition of existing bungalow and erection of new dwelling.
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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.
3. Since the planning application was determined, the King's Cliffe Neighbourhood Development Plan (NP) has been made. Its policies therefore carry full weight in the determination of this appeal. I have taken into account the comments of both main parties on those policies.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area and on highway safety.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and appearance

5. 107 Wood Road is a detached, rendered bungalow located on the northern side of Wood Road, in a predominantly residential area. The bungalow is set well back from the road, has a drive to the front and side and a garden to the rear. There are two gated vehicle accesses with brick piers to the front. The appeal bungalow sits in between a row of semi-detached properties to the west, which are sited closer to the road, and larger detached properties to the east, which are set further back.
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6. The neighbouring properties vary in terms of scale, design, materials and siting in relation to the road, although the appeal site and the detached properties located immediately to the east have a level of consistency in terms of the width of the plots, as they sit within wide, spacious plots. The width of the detached dwellings is consistent to that of their plots. This consistency in the width of the plots and dwellings makes a positive contribution to this part of the street scene.
7. The proposal seeks to partly demolish the eastern side of the appeal bungalow and to construct a detached two storey dwelling immediately to the east. The new dwelling would have a pitched roof, a front facing gable end, a garden to the rear and a private drive to the front.
8. The subdivision of the existing plot would lead to a narrow plot for the new dwelling. The form of the new dwelling would be significantly constrained by the narrowness of its plot. Thus, the width of the new plot and the form of the dwelling, particularly when viewed in relation to the wide, detached dwellings located to the east, on the northern side of Wood Road, would be at odds with those of neighbouring properties. Whilst the appeal bungalow is different from the neighbouring properties located within proximity of the site, the width of its plot is similar to that of the other detached properties, as set out above. The introduction of a detached, narrower dwelling to the side of No 107 would disrupt the existing pattern of development and the dwelling itself would appear as an incongruous, cramped addition which would harmfully affect the character and appearance of the area.
9. Whilst gable front elements are present within the street scene, the proposal is not directly comparable with No 113, as the front gable of that property is just an element of its wide frontage.
10. In terms of the overall appearance of the new dwelling, I acknowledge that it has been designed in a manner that would allow a transition between the bungalow and the detached property located to the east, in terms of height and siting in relation to the road. In addition, I note that the Council did not object specifically to the proposed materials. However, these matters do not make the scheme acceptable and do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
11. The appellant has drawn my attention to a dwelling located within the conservation area of the village and has stated that the width of this dwelling is narrower than that of the proposed dwelling. Whilst I have considered the photographic evidence provided by the appellant, I do not have full details of this development, such as its precise location and the circumstances that led to its approval. Moreover, this dwelling is not part of the street scene around the appeal site. As such, I have considered the proposal based on its own site specific circumstances.
12. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would adversely affect the established pattern of development, thus resulting in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the development would be contrary to Policy 8 d) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031, and Policy BE1 of the NP which require, amongst other things, that developments integrate into their surroundings. This policy is consistent with paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which requires, amongst other things, that developments are sympathetic to the local character, including the surrounding built environment.

Highway safety

13. The existing large front drive would be subdivided to provide two off-street parking spaces for the bungalow and two for the new dwelling. The existing eastern vehicle access would serve the new dwelling whilst the existing western access would serve the altered bungalow. The Council has expressed concerns about the visibility from the two access points and the amount of turning space available.
14. Photographic evidence submitted by the appellant indicates that given 2 parking spaces are required for each unit, there would be an opportunity for vehicles to turn within each site and leave in a forward gear, as it is currently possible now. There is no counter evidence before me, and I have no reason to consider this would not be the case. Whilst the Council indicates that the required visibility splays cannot be achieved, these existing access points are already in use by the occupants of the bungalow. There is no evidence that the visibility at these access points has caused any adverse effects in terms of highway safety and whilst I acknowledge that there would be an increase in their use as a result of the proposal, that increase is likely to be modest.
15. Nonetheless, the appellant is willing to improve visibility through the removal of the existing brick piers either side of both entrances and by lowering the existing fences. A reduction in the height of the piers would improve visibility and could be controlled by condition had I been minded to allow the appeal.
16. Consequently, on the basis of the evidence before me, I am satisfied that the proposal would not cause a danger to highway safety. As such, I conclude that the proposal would not conflict with policy 8 b) i. or ii. of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031, which seeks to resist developments that would prejudice highway safety and ensure satisfactory means of access and provision of parking, servicing and manoeuvring space. Nevertheless, this does not negate the harm that the development would have on the character and appearance of the area.

Other matters

17. I note that the appellant considers the proposed dwelling to be in the affordable range for the area. However, whilst it may be cheaper than some other properties in the area, no evidence to demonstrate that the proposal is for affordable housing, as opposed to open market housing, has been provided, and moreover, there is no mechanism before me to ensure that the development would be secured and retained as affordable housing in perpetuity.
18. I acknowledge that the development would contribute to the supply of housing within the village and that the bungalow could potentially provide housing for elderly. However, the proposal fails to accord with the relevant policies relating to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, any benefits in this respect do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Recommendation

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

Andreea Spataru

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

S Ashworth

INSPECTOR