



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 May 2020

by Jonathan Hockley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th June 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2810/W/20/3244975

25 Holdenby Road, Spratton NN6 8JD

- 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 P Newton against the decision of Daventry District Council.
 - The application Ref DA/2018/0926, dated 13 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 6 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey dwelling together with off road parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Subsequent to the making of this appeal, Daventry District Council adopted the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) for Daventry District 2011-2029 (the Local Plan). Previous policies referred to in this case from the 1997 Daventry District Local Plan are replaced by the adoption of this plan. This change to the development plan has been referred to by the appellant and I have considered the relevant policies below.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is whether the proposal constitutes a suitable scheme for development, having regard to the character and appearance of the area, the living conditions of any future residents of the proposal, and to the development plan.

Reasons

4. Spratton is a reasonably sized nucleated village which appears to have grown significantly from its historic core centred upon St Andrews Church. Holdenby Road is located to the south of this core, linked to the main services in the village by Church Road and Yew Tree Lane at its eastern end. Holdenby Road itself is predominantly characterised by more modern development, of varying forms but largely 2 storey houses set as detached, semi-detached, or as short terraces.
5. A range of backland development is also in evidence to the south of Holdenby Road, accessed by various cul-de-sacs situated between houses, such as 'the Brambles'. The effect of these developments has been to create a new line of development on the southern edge of the village.

6. The proposal seeks to construct a bungalow in the rear gardens of No 25 and no 23 Holdenby Road, in between this row of development to the south of Holdenby Road and Holdenby Road itself. No 25 is the end property on a row of three terraced houses, with no 23 forming the middle unit. The proposal seeks to construct an access road to the side of No 25, in part utilising an existing drive, and construct a single storey 2 bedroom bungalow to the rear of Nos 23 and 25. The garden to the rear of No 25 at present is fairly overgrown with various temporary structures, whereas the garden to No 23 is more maintained.
7. The bungalow would be orientated towards the west, with its northern side elevation facing towards the rear of the 2 storey Nos 25 & 23. When on site, the garden areas do not appear particularly large or spacious. The appellant notes that there would be around 12m separation between the rear of No 25 and the proposed bungalow. However, this 12m would include a newly proportioned rear garden for No 25, a proposed 2m fence as boundary treatment between the properties and a car parking space for the new property as well. The size of the plot when I was on site did not appear to me visually to be of a size appropriate to house a proposed 2 bedroom bungalow, which would I consider appear cramped within the site, with space on the northern and western sides only for single parking spaces and a very narrow gap on its south side.
8. This effect would be magnified by the height and siting of the bungalow when compared to its surroundings, by 'squeezing' in a single storey property in between 2 or 1½ storey surrounding properties and forming a new line of development between Holdenby Road and the ribbon development behind this lane. While in the context of the ribbon development the construction of the new required access road would not appear out of place, the new proposed dwelling would appear out of context within the grain of the area, regardless of the design of the proposal. The height and siting of the proposal would appear dwarfed by the houses to the north and south of the site, and in this context would appear further cramped and out of place.
9. In a similar vein, the proximity of the northern elevation of the proposed bungalow to the upper southern side of No 25 would feel uncomfortably close to the future residents of the property. While plans indicate that this distance would be in the region of 14m, from the perspective of the future residents of the new bungalow while in their kitchen or northern bedroom the higher level of the upper floor windows of No 25 would create the perception of overlooking into such rooms, adversely affecting the living conditions of any future residents.
10. The appellant notes that the proposal would remove existing haphazard and informal car parking which has an adverse impact on the street scene. While on site I noted such car parking; however, while by necessity some of this would be removed by the proposed access road the plan still provides for car parking in front of No 25. I therefore consider that while the proposed parking arrangements of the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the area, such benefits of the scheme would be fairly minimal and would not outweigh the harm that I have identified above.

11. Policy S3 of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS)¹ provides a figure for housing development in the rural areas of the District, which the Council confirms has been met. In such a context Policy R1 of the JCS states that further housing development will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that it would result in environmental improvements on a site or is required to support the retention of, or improvement to, essential local services, and has been informed by an effective community involvement exercise prior to the submission of a planning application, or is a rural exceptions site or has been agreed through an adopted neighbourhood plan.
12. The appellant is of the view that the proposal would result in an environmental improvement by tidying up and removing the existing garden sheds on site. However, such buildings are temporary in nature and the garden area could be tidied relatively simply and, given the negative effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area that I have identified I do not consider that the scheme would result in overall environmental improvements. The proposal is not accompanied by any assessment of how the scheme may be required to support local services and, on the evidence provided, was not informed by a community involvement exercise prior to the submission of a planning application. Finally, the site is not a rural exceptions site and while it falls within the development boundaries of the Neighbourhood Plan² it has not been agreed through this Neighbourhood Plan. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy R1 of the JCS.
13. Policy RA2 of the Local Plan states that development within the confines of Spratton shall protect the form and character of the village. However, the proposal would introduce a new line of development alien to the grain of the settlement which would be contrary to this policy. Furthermore the proposal would also be contrary to policy ENV10 of the same plan (referred to in the Council Officer's report), which states that development should promote local distinctiveness, ensure that the scale, density, massing and height of a proposal combine to ensure developments blend well within the site and surroundings, and protect the amenity of new dwellings.
14. The appellant raises Policies HS1 and HS2 of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, these policies state that proposals should respect the built environment and reflect the character of the surrounding area by, where appropriate, reflecting the scale, mass, height and form of its neighbouring development, and that proposals which would lead to over-development or the appearance of cramming will be resisted. For the reasons given above I consider that the proposal would be contrary to such policies.
15. I note the appellant's comments concerning the precedence of plans, given the relative ages of the Joint Core Strategy and the Local Plan. However, for the above reasons the proposal would be contrary to the Local Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan, and to the Joint Core Strategy and therefore the proposal would not comply with the development plan as a whole.
16. My attention is also drawn to planning approval DA/20108/1034. I note that in that case the Planning Officer considered that the proposal would not lead to any environmental improvements but would not harm the existing natural environment. However, above I have considered that the proposal in this case

¹ West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1)

² Spratton Neighbourhood Development Plan 2015-2029, July 2016

would cause harm to the wider environment. Furthermore, each case must be considered on its own merits.

17. The proposal would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which states in paragraph 127 that planning decisions should ensure that developments will add to the overall quality of the area, are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment setting, and should create places with a high standard of amenity for future users.

Conclusions

18. I therefore conclude that the proposal does not constitute a suitable scheme for development, having regard to the character and appearance of the area, the living conditions of any future residents of the proposal and to the development plan.
19. Therefore, for the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR