
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 July 2020

by Darren Hendley BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/P4415/W/20/3252382

125 Laughton Road, Thurcroft, Rotherham S66 9BP

- 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 Lee Clarke, KB Homes against the decision of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: RB2020/0122, dated 22 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a corner plot of land that has been fenced off from 125 Laughton Road (No 125). It is understood from the submissions that the site was formerly part of the garden of this neighbouring property. The site has a narrow frontage with Laughton Road and it then extends back alongside the hedgerow boundary with Howards Close. The site also projects back to the rear of No 125.
4. The site is found at the end of a row of bungalow properties that are set a fairly uniform distance back from Laughton Road and with site frontages of a similar appreciable width. This side of the road also contains occasional cul-de-sacs and some dwellings that are set further back. It maintains a sense of spacing that contributes to a pleasing character, as does a landscaping belt opposite the site associated with a modern housing development.
5. Due to the narrow nature of the plot to the front, the proposal would have an untypical arrangement compared to the established pattern of residential development. It would be well set back from the building line of the adjacent row of bungalows on Laughton Road. In addition, as it would be located in close proximity to its Howards Close frontage, it would appear confined. Hence, it would be a cramped and uncharacteristic form of development in these more open surroundings.

6. As a consequence, the proposal would appear as an uncomfortable addition to the area, even if the hedgerow along the boundary with Howards Close would be retained with the proximity of the proposed dwelling. It would not fit into the streetscene and nor would this be adequately addressed by the proposed bungalow design. This is because it would not alter that it would appear out of character due to the narrow form of the plot.
7. I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would not comply with Policy CS28 of the Council's Rotherham Local Plan Core Strategy 2013 – 2028 (2014) and with Policies SP12 and SP55 of the Sites and Policies (2018). These policies are concerned with design taking all opportunities to improve the character and quality of an area and the way it functions; development on a garden, including infill of corner plots, not resulting in harm to the character of the area; and high quality design and local distinctiveness, amongst other considerations.
8. It would also not accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) in relation to achieving well designed places, including where it states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, that developments are to be sympathetic to local character and that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions.

Other Matters

9. The proposal would make a contribution to the housing requirement of the area and to the supply of housing, in accordance with the development plan and the Framework. As one additional dwelling would result, though, this would be of a modest benefit and would not outweigh the harm that would arise. The same applies with regard to that it would be adaptive for disabled persons.
10. Concerning highway safety matters and the proposed vehicle turning within the site, the Council do not raise an objection on the basis of this being dealt with by way of a planning condition, if I was minded to allow the appeal. The proposed separation distances to the neighbouring properties and the amenity space provision would also not be unacceptable. These matters do not, though, overcome the harm by way of character and appearance.
11. The appellant has referred me to an approved dwelling (ref: RB2016/1677) on land to the rear of the site, which the associated driveway would pass through. Whilst this would result in a long access arrangement and a large frontage, it would not involve a dwelling being located in a way that would unduly harm the local character. Hence, the proposal would not be a preferable alternative or an acceptable addition to the permission for the approved dwelling if that has, or can still be, implemented. It does not alter my conclusion.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all matters that have been raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

Darren Hendley

INSPECTOR