



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 August 2020

by Robert Fallon B.Sc. (Hons) PGDipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H2835/W/20/3249671

49 Fourth Avenue, Wellingborough, NN8 3NE

- 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 Charlie Scott Mangan against the decision of Borough Council of Wellingborough.
 - The application Ref WP/19/00622/FUL dated 25 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "Residential Development of 1No dwelling on under-utilised garden land including access and amenity space."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

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

Reasons

Appeal site context

3. Fourth Avenue is an attractive suburban road characterised by mature 2-storey semi-detached houses separated by generous gaps utilised for driveways and garages. Although the properties slightly vary in design, they are unified by their similar brick and tile finish, semi-detached scale & pattern, bay windows, hipped roofs and chimneys. The highway is lined with a mixture of dwarf walls and mature front boundary hedges/shrubs.
4. The appeal site forms part of the side and rear garden to No 49 Fourth Avenue ('No 49'), one half of a pair of semi-detached properties at the south-western gateway to the road. It is characterised by the properties being set at a tangent to highway and the presence of a spacious first floor gap between the side elevation of No 49 and the neighbouring property at No 47. This layout is reciprocated on the opposite corner with a similar pair of semi-detached properties, which accordingly gives the road entrance a symmetrical, prominent and spacious character.

Character and appearance

5. The proposed dwelling would obliterate the spacious and prominent gap that currently exists between the side elevations of Nos 47 and 49 and give the

impression that it had been squeezed onto the site contrary to the established pattern of development. As a consequence, it would have a cramped and contrived appearance, wholly out of character with the spacious character of the existing plot and neighbouring properties on Fourth Avenue. The development would also be publicly visible when approaching from both directions on Fourth Avenue, which would intensify its harmful impact.

6. I recognize that the proposed dwelling has been designed in a similar architectural style to the neighbouring dwellings and could be constructed of matching materials. However, this does not outweigh my concerns in respect of the harm identified above in relation to plot and streetscene character.
7. In view of the above, I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy 8 of the Core Strategy¹ which seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that new development responds to a site's immediate and wider context and local character.
8. I also find that the scheme conflicts with Paragraphs 127 and 130 of the Framework² which collectively seek, amongst other things; (a) visually attractive development that is sympathetic to local character; (b) schemes that establish or maintain a strong sense of place using the established pattern of buildings, streets and spaces; and (c) the refusal of permission for poorly designed development that fails to take the opportunities available to improve the character and quality of an area.

Other matters

9. I note the Appellant's frustration regarding the manner in which the formal application was processed and the lack of design guidance for new dwellings, but this has little bearing on the planning merits of the scheme before me and is a matter between the parties.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of detached properties adjacent to semi-detached houses and developments granted planning permission/allowed at appeal that they consider to be comparable to the appeal scheme. However, these are of a different character, location and scale to that before me and are not therefore directly comparable. In any event, I must consider the appeal scheme on its own merits.
11. The Council application report has confirmed that a financial contribution to mitigate the impact of the scheme on the nearby Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area and Ramsar site has been secured from the appellant. However, given that I am dismissing the development for other reasons, it has not been necessary for me to carry out an appropriate assessment of the scheme and consider the requested financial contribution as it would not alter the outcome of the appeal.

Planning balance

12. The scheme would result in a range of benefits, namely; (a) the provision of an additional dwelling; (b) a contribution towards the Council's housing land

¹ North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031, Adopted July 2016, North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit.

² National Planning Policy Framework, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, February 2019.

supply; and (c) local employment during construction. However, these benefits would be of limited value given the quantum of development proposed, and when taken cumulatively would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area I have identified. Furthermore, I have not given great weight to these benefits in accordance with Paragraph 68 of the Framework as I do not consider it to be a suitable small site for residential development for the reasons referred to above. I therefore conclude that these material considerations do not indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

13. All representations have been taken into account, but no matters, including the benefits of the development and the scope of possible planning conditions, have been found to outweigh the identified harm and policy conflict. For the reasons above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Fallon

INSPECTOR