



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2020

by S Thomas BSc (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D1835/W/19/3239814

Land off Farm Close, Worcester

- 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 & Ms Fowles & Perry against the decision of Worcester City Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00384/FUL, dated 28 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing garages and construction of detached bungalow.
-

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

3. The appeal site is located at the end of Farm Close, previously forming part of rear gardens along Field Road. Farm Close is a T shaped cul de sac, characterised by a predominant linear settlement pattern, with semi-detached bungalows facing the close, set back a similar distance from the highway behind front gardens. The row of properties that face west on one side of the close continues the linear form of development along this arm. Field Road contains larger semi-detached dwellings but is also characterised by its prevailing linear pattern of development.
4. Although the site no longer forms part of the rear gardens of properties on Field Road, given the site is largely screened behind existing fencing and gates, the site, when viewed from Farm Close relates visually to these gardens. The bungalow would be sited further back into the plot than the existing garages and considering it would be surrounded by the rear gardens, the set back nature of the bungalow would appear to visually intrude amongst them.
5. Furthermore, whilst the bungalow would have a frontage to Farm Close, it would depart from the planned linear arrangement of the row of bungalows facing west and would face onto them. Thus, the standalone dwelling would appear as a fragmented addition and would not sit comfortably in the street scene.

6. Whilst the bungalow would face the same way as the bungalows on the southern side of Farm Close, it would be set back beyond their rear gardens and accordingly would not relate well visually to them. Therefore, the proposed siting would fail to relate well to the linear pattern of the bungalows on either arm of Farm Close. It would be seen as an incongruent feature which would fail to integrate successfully into the street scene when viewed from Farm Close. Therefore, given the above, I do not consider that the proposal would constitute a natural infill.
7. Although the substantial gardens along Field Road contain extensions and outbuildings, there is a spacious pleasant character to the rear of these properties. However, when viewed from the rear of these properties, given the overgrown nature of the appeal site it does not share this pleasant character. Nevertheless, the site contains garages which are viewed in association with the various outbuildings in the neighbouring gardens and thus visually they do not appear out of place in this context.
8. I note the bungalow would not disrupt the linear pattern of development when viewed from the street scene along Field Road. I also recognise the opportunity to tidy up the site. Nevertheless, the proposed bungalow would be seen out of context with the surrounding rear gardens, and together with its siting further back into the plot than the garages, would be very prominent and visually intrusive when viewed from the rear of these properties. The conflict with the established linear settlement pattern in the area would be readily apparent and the bungalow would appear incongruous.
9. The parties have referred to relevant extracts from a previous appeal decision for a similar proposal at the site, however a copy of the full decision is not before me. Whilst I recognise the planning context has changed since that decision, in line with the current development plan, and based on the evidence before me, I also conclude that the current proposal would disrupt the predominant linear settlement pattern and would be out of character with the area.
10. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Thus, it would be in conflict with Policy SWDP21 of the South Worcestershire Development Plan (2016). Amongst other things, this policy seeks to ensure that development integrates effectively with its surroundings, proposals should complement the character of the area and should respond to surrounding buildings.

Other Matters

11. I recognise that the proposal would be acceptable in relation to access, parking, drainage, flooding and ecology. However, whilst these are considerations relating to the proposed scheme, these matters are required to be acceptable in their own right to make the development acceptable. Therefore, they hold neutral weight in favour of the proposed development.
12. The proposal would lead to some minor economic benefits during construction and following occupation of the bungalow. Further, it would provide an efficient re use of land in line with local and national policy and would be in a location that has good access to local services by sustainable transport options. I also recognise within Policy SWDP20 of the SWDP that a wide range of housing is

needed to meet the needs of older people, which includes bungalows. The proposed bungalow would contribute to this need.

13. However, these benefits are not sufficient either singly or in combination to outweigh the clearly identified harm I have found to the area's character and appearance. The conflict with the development plan is not outweighed by other considerations in this case. Accordingly, I find the proposal would not constitute sustainable development in line with paragraph 11 of the Framework.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons outlined above, the appeal does not succeed.

S Thomas

INSPECTOR