
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2020

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert (Urb) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/U4610/W/20/3245478
260A Hawkes Mill Lane, Coventry CV5 9FJ

- 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 Clarke (Zurich Developments Ltd) against the decision of Coventry City Council.
 - The application Ref OUT/2019/1375, dated 29 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing buildings and the erection of four dwellings (access, scale, layout and appearance to be considered).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application is for outline planning permission with access, scale, layout and appearance to be determined at this stage. The landscaping matter is reserved for future consideration. Landscaping shown on the submitted plans has been treated as indicative. The application description details amendment to previous planning consent OUT/2018/2653. This has been omitted from the above description as it describes the purpose of the proposal rather than its nature.
3. The appeal site lies within the Green Belt and the Council has not raised this as an issue. Nevertheless, the matter will be considered later in the decision. Another outline planning permission has recently been granted for three dwellings on the site which has been considered in the reasoning in this decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a range of agricultural buildings to the rear of Hawkes Mill Lane. The site is accessed off a long track which lies between two dwellings on the frontage of this road. The track also serves an isolated dwelling to the rear of the frontage dwellings along the road.

6. There are pairs of semi-detached dwellings along Hawkes Mill Lane but overall, the road comprises a range of dwelling forms, scales and designs. Dwellings are set back from the road, generally with long rear gardens, and a well-established landscaped context. The spacious plots have enabled the establishment of landscaping, and surrounding these properties to the rear and front, there are fields/paddocks and trees. Consequently, the area has a distinct semi-rural and informal character and appearance.
7. The layout matters show pairs of dwellings sited at either side of the end of the long track. In one pair, one of the houses would be forward of the other creating a staggered pattern. The development would result in the demolition of existing utilitarian and rather derelict looking rural buildings. The dwellings' detailed aesthetics and finishes would accord with the guidance of the Coventry's Ancient Eden Supplementary Planning Guidance 1995.
8. However, the location of the dwellings would be a substantial distance away from the existing frontage row of dwellings on the road and would be in a transitional area between the road frontage and the countryside. The pairs of dwellings would be sited close to one another and each pair would be of identical scale and appearance. The height to eaves and the ridge also would give rise to a considerable scale to the dwellings. There would also be two large shared vehicle parking areas serving each pair of dwellings. Such parking areas would be overly imposing due to their size and general lack of opportunities for landscaping to visually break up their extent. Overall, such a design would give rise to rather rigid, formal layout and suburban qualities to the development which would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area.
9. There is a previous outline planning permission for residential development on the site and the floorspace would be the same as that proposed. The permitted two dwellings would also be larger than those along the road. However, the two dwellings would be on larger plots with more informal and less clustered siting which would enable better visual assimilation into the surrounding area by reason of greater space about them and opportunity for more extensive landscaping. Recently, outline planning permission for three dwellings has been granted on the site. The submitted plan show dwellings of identical footprint but they would also be on larger plots and the submitted plan also shows more dispersed parking areas. Again, this would result in better visual assimilation into the surrounding area. For all these reasons, these developments would be materially different from that proposed here and would not result in the type of harm identified here.
10. In conclusion, the development would not complement or enhance the character of the surrounding area and accordingly, the proposal would conflict with policy DE1 of the Coventry Local Plan (LP) 2016.

Other matters

11. The proposal would boost housing supply and the smaller housing would align with the general demand for more affordable family housing in the area. The proposal would make more effective use of land. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) requires developments to optimise the potential of the sites to accommodate and sustain an appropriate amount and mix of development. However, the Framework also requires developments to be sympathetic to local character and there would be significant and permanent

harm to the character and appearance of the area. Although comprising a lesser number of dwellings, there has also been planning permissions granted on this site for residential development as well. For all these reasons, the harm arising from the proposal would outweigh the benefits.

12. Turning to Green Belt issues, main parties agree that the floorspace of the proposal would be less than that of the existing buildings on the site but there is little information on the size of existing site buildings to compare. Without this, it is not possible to make an assessment as to whether greater size is being proposed under the appeal. Given this, it is not possible for me to ascertain whether this is acceptable development in the Green Belt. Nevertheless, there is a substantive reason to dismiss this appeal for the reasons indicated and therefore, there is no requirement to go back to parties over these matters.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area in conflict with LP policy and the development plan taken as a whole. For the reasons indicated, there are no material considerations to outweigh that finding. Therefore, for the reasons set out above, this appeal is dismissed.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR