
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 September 2020

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Wednesday, 30 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/20/3250536

Land adjacent No. 26 Granta Road, Sawston, Cambridgeshire CB22 3HT

- 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 Bradbury against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref: S/0080/20/FL, dated 11 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is a new detached dwelling, and parking for two vehicles. New footpath crossover.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of a grassed area located at the end of a cul-de-sac. Surrounding dwellings are typically terraced or semi-detached of comparable designs and are located a consistent distance away from the highway. The appeal site, in conjunction with an area of open space on the opposite side of Granta Road, creates an open verdant character. The site also assists in delineating between the built-up areas of Granta Road and Meadowfield Road. Beyond the appeal site is countryside that forms part of the Green Belt.
4. The evidence before me indicates that the appeal site is not subject to any form of allocation within adopted planning policy and is also not within a Conservation Area. However, the site, in its current form, plays a role in defining the extent of existing built up areas.
5. The nearest dwellings in Meadowfield Road are set further forward of the houses in Granta Road. In consequence, the proposed development would appear incongruous as it would result in a marked change in the alignment in dwellings within a short distance. In addition, the increase in built form would result in the loss of open space between the two streets. In result, the proposal would erode the verdant, open character that is a feature of the ends of both Granta Road and Meadowfield Road. This effect would occur irrespective of the proposed dwelling having a height comparable to other houses within the surrounding area.

6. I acknowledge that there is some debate regarding the precise use of the appeal site. However, irrespective of this, the site, in its current form does form as an effective transitional space between the existing built up areas. This gives the appeal site a distinctive character, which would be eroded by the proposed development as it would increase the amount of built form in the vicinity of the appeal site. In consequence, irrespective of the actual use of the appeal site and whilst the development would represent an infill between dwellings, the proposal would result in a significant erosion of the existing character of the site and the surrounding area.
7. In addition, by reason of the restricted size of the appeal site and its limited width, the proposal would result in development at a high density. I have been directed towards adopted development plan policies that seek to limit the density of residential developments in order to ensure that that development is appropriate to its surroundings.
8. As the dwelling would be clearly visible from points in both Granta Road and Meadowfield Road, this great density would erode the prevailing open, verdant character that is a feature of the site and the role that it plays in separating existing different areas of housing. This erosion is of particular concern given that the site is on the edge of the settlement and therefore forms a transitional space between the built-up character of Sawston and the settlement beyond.
9. The land to the rear of the site forms part of the Green Belt. However, the site is not covered by this designation and appears to be within the settlement of Sawston. Whilst the proposed development would be visible from the Green Belt, the proposal would not result in development taking place in closer proximity to the Green Belt. In addition, from the Green Belt, the proposed development would be viewed alongside other dwellings, that are arranged in differing linear patterns. In addition, had I been minded to allow this appeal, I could have imposed a condition that would have secured the provision of additional landscaping within the confines of the appeal site.
10. Such landscaping would have allowed for a transitional space to be formed between the proposed dwelling and the area beyond the settlement of Sawston. This would ensure that the development would not have an adverse effect on the character and openness of the Green Belt. Therefore, the proposed development would not be contrary to the requirements of Policy NH/8 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2018) (the Local Plan).
11. Whilst I have identified that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the Green Belt, this does not outweigh the harm that would emanate to the surrounding residential area and specifically, the character and appearance of the Granta Road and Meadowfield Road.
12. The proposed development would add to the local housing supply and residents would be able to support the local economy which would be of some benefit. However, by reason of the scale of the development, such benefits would not be large. In addition, I have been directed towards adopted planning policies that seek to ensure that developments do not impinge upon the character and appearance of the area surrounding sites.

13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development, in this regard, would conflict with Policies HQ/1 and H/8 of the Local Plan. These policies, amongst other matters, seek to ensure that new developments preserve or enhance the character of local urban areas; respect local distinctiveness; and achieve a density not in excess of 30 dwellings per hectare.

Other Matters

14. It appears that occupiers of the development would have access to public transport provision and other services within the settlement of Sawston. Whilst this is a matter of note, it does not allow me to disregard my conclusions in respect of the Main Issue.
15. The evidence before indicates that the proposal would not result in a notable adverse effect upon the highway system and that satisfactory living conditions would be secured for the future occupiers of the proposed development and the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Whilst some weight can be attributed to these matters, they do not overcome the significant adverse effects as previously identified.
16. My attention has been drawn to a previous appeal decision. I do not have the full information regarding the planning circumstances of these, which lessens the weight that I can attribute to it. Furthermore, I note that this appeal decision pertains to a site in a different settlement. In result, the likely differences in the circumstances of the sites are such that they would not overcome the previous conclusions.
17. I acknowledge efforts made by the appellant in attempting to overcome the reasons for the refusal of a previous planning application. However, such endeavours do not overcome my findings in respect of the Main Issue.

Conclusion

18. For the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR