



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2020

by A Denby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/J3270/W/20/3251562

Land within former garden of the Laurels Farmhouse, Becks Lane, Stockton, Warwickshire, CV47 8FB

- 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 R Law against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01510/FUL, dated 31 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 10 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of 3no. terraced dwellings with associated external works to include shared private driveway and the provision of 6no parking spaces.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Notwithstanding the description of development set out above, which is taken from the planning application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details that the proposals were amended during the application process and that the development proposes 1 detached and 2 semi-detached dwellings. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and so shall I.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the proposal would contribute to an oversupply of housing in the village, with specific regard to the demand on local services and facilities.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The site is located within a predominately residential area and is currently a vacant plot of land situated between Becks Lane and Laurel Drive. There are mature trees within the site and substantial landscaping to the site boundary with Becks Lane. The site therefore has a spacious and open character and contributes positively to the character of the surrounding area.

5. The appeal scheme proposes 3 new dwellings with vehicular access to the site from Becks Lane. The ground level rises across the site up to Laurel Drive and the proposed dwellings would be positioned at this higher level, in closer proximity to, and fronting on to, Laurel Drive.
6. There is a strong regularity in the street scene to Laurel Drive which comes from the consistent height and width of buildings, spacing between dwellings and set back from the frontages. The dwellings are also predominately large detached properties with repetition of building styles throughout the street scene.
7. The appeal scheme comprises a detached and pair of semi-detached dwellings that, due to their size, design and layout, would be at odds with the established character of adjacent development on Laurel Drive. The dwellings would be higher and considerably narrower than existing development. The design of the proposed semi-detached properties would also be particularly discordant, with a front gable feature that would be distinctly different from others in the street, being noticeably narrower and having a steeper roof pitch.
8. The proposed parking area would result in a greater spacing between the built form and, with the separation to the existing dwelling at the Laurels Farmhouse, the proposed dwellings would appear as an isolated group within the street.
9. Whilst some aspects of the design would reflect that of existing properties, such as the canopy and proposed materials, these would not be sufficient to mitigate the overall incongruity of the proposed dwellings.
10. Although there is a greater mix of designs and dwelling sizes to Becks Lane, with some providing accommodation within the roof space, there is still regularity in the street scene with buildings of the same style and design forming coherent groups. This would not be the case with the appeal scheme. Nevertheless, considering the change in ground levels, existing landscaping and separation to existing buildings, the proposed dwellings would not have a clear visual relationship to the existing development on Becks Lane.
11. They would be viewed in the context of the more regimented and consistent development in Laurel Drive. As such the development would fail to respond to the adjacent properties in terms of size, design and layout. They would be visually detached from the existing linear arrangement of development and appear as an isolated and incongruous addition within the street scene, at odds with the established pattern of development.
12. On the basis of the above the proposal would result in a harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area and therefore be contrary to Policies CS.9 & CS.15 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy 2011-2031 (LP), which seek to ensure that developments achieve a high quality of design having regard to existing character and local distinctiveness.
13. For the same reasons the development would not accord with the high-quality design requirements of Part D of the Development Requirements Supplementary Planning Document, 2018 and Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Housing supply

14. The site is within Stockton which is identified as a Category 2 Local Service Village (LSV). LP Policy CS.15 states that within LSVs small scale schemes on unidentified but suitable sites within the built-up area boundaries, or otherwise within their physical confines, would be supported and this is also reflected in LP Policy AS.10. The site is not allocated in the LP, though it is small scale and within the physical confines of the village.
15. LP Policy CS.16 seeks to ensure that new housing development meets the identified needs of the District and states that, of the homes allocated for LSVs, about 700 are required in the Category 2 LSVs and that no more than around 12% should be provided in any individual settlement. The Council indicate that the housing delivery targets in Stockton have already been exceeded.
16. However, the figures within the LP are not rigid, and whilst the proposal would add to this oversupply, there is no substantive evidence to demonstrate that the existing services and facilities could not accommodate the small increase in the number of dwellings proposed by the appeal scheme. Therefore, with regards to this main issue, the proposal would not conflict with LP Policies AS.10 CS.15 & CS.16 which, amongst other things, seek to direct housing to main centres and local service villages.

Other Matters

17. The appellant has drawn my attention to an allowed appeal relating to housing development within a different LSV. In that case the Inspector found there to be no conflict with LP Policies AS.10, CS.15 & CS.16. However, they also considered the impact on the character and appearance of the area, in that case, to be acceptable. As detailed above, this is not the case with the current appeal scheme, and I therefore do not consider it to be directly comparable.
18. I note the appellant has attempted to address the Council's objections to a previous scheme on the site, and the development proposal was originally recommended for approval by the Council Officer and the decision to refuse planning permission was taken by Members at Planning Committee. However, this is part of the democratic process and does not alter the harmful effects I have found. Therefore, having considered the appeal on its merits these other matters do not, therefore, lead me to a different conclusion.

Planning Balance

19. LP Policy CS.15 and the Framework do emphasise the need to support the efficient use of land and I recognise the important contribution small sites can make to meeting the housing requirements of an area.
20. The Council have stated that they are able to demonstrate a 5year housing land supply, and the proposal would add to an existing oversupply within the village. Nevertheless, as detailed above, the proposal for an additional 3 dwellings would not give rise to harm or undue demand on local services. The provision of additional housing is therefore still a benefit of the appeal scheme. However, the provision of 3 dwellings would only have a limited benefit in relation to boosting housing supply.
21. Any employment created during construction or from future occupants use of local services would also only result in temporary and modest benefits. That

the development would be located close to local services, and provide adequate garden area, would have a neutral effect, and therefore do not weigh in favour of the appeal.

22. Whilst I have not found harm in relation to the provision of additional dwellings in the village, as detailed above, the proposal would result in unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area and I do not consider any benefits of the proposal would be sufficient to outweigh this harm.

Conclusion

23. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Denby

INSPECTOR