



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 20 October 2020 by John Gunn DipTP Dip DBE MRTPI

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30th November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y2810/W/20/3256058

Paddock Lodge Tantree Way, Brixworth, NN6 9UQ

- 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 Justin Maeers against the decision of Daventry District Council.
 - The application Ref DA/2020/0037, dated 13 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 17 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Full planning application for the erection of 2 x 3-bedroom semi-detached dwellings and replacement double garage'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the heading above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and, whether the site is in a suitable location for residential development having regard to the effect of the proposal on the spatial strategy for the area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises Paddock Lodge, a bungalow, and a parcel of land that adjoins it. The land has been sub divided providing a garden and driveway for the retained bungalow and a separate plot of overgrown land upon which a garage is located. Access is provided from Tantree Way.
5. The area immediately adjacent the appeal site is characterised by individually designed detached dwellings, arranged informally around the turning head of Tantree Way, on spacious plots. These dwellings contrast markedly with the properties to the east, which comprise of modest sized dwellings, on smaller

plots with limited spaces between them, and more discernible building lines. The appeal site is seen in the context of the properties at the western end of Tantree Way, which appear to be of an appreciably lower density than other parts of the estate through which it is accessed.

6. The Council, for its part, considers that the design of the building proposed, which incorporate some features and materials more in keeping with the dwellings located at the western end of Tantree Way, would be an improvement over the design of the single detached dwelling approved in 2018. I acknowledge that the building's design would reflect nearby development, and its single door on the front elevation and other design features would give the appearance of a single dwelling.
7. However, the parking areas that would serve the respective dwellings, and possible division of the front garden area would clearly identify the building as 2 separate dwellings, the semi-detached form of which would be out keeping with the prevailing character and appearance of the area. Moreover, the substantially smaller plot sizes would draw attention to a type of development which would not respect the character and quality of the area.
8. I acknowledge that the proposed dwelling would have a similar footprint to the approved scheme, however it would be longer and would be sited closer to the common boundary with No 26 Tantree Way. Moreover, the forward-facing gable proposed on plot 2 would project further forward than the approved scheme and narrow the gap between the front elevation of the development and the existing hedge that lies on the common boundary with Beech House. As a result, the proposed development would appear cramped, and would not reflect the more spacious appearance of the dwellings in the immediate vicinity.
9. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would be in conflict with Policies SA, S1 D) 1) and S10 i) of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (2014) (JCS) which seek, amongst other things, for sustainable developments that enhance the natural and built environment, and maintain the distinctive character and vitality of rural communities. It would also conflict with Policies SP1 (G) and ENV10 (A) i), iii) and vii) of the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) for the Daventry District 2011-2029 (DSCLP) which seek to protect and enhance the built environment and deliver developments that are of a high quality design that reflect and integrate with the surrounding area.

Suitability of location for development

10. Policy S1 of the JCS sets out the distribution of development within the plan area, focussing development in, and adjoining, the main urban areas of Northampton and Daventry. Policy S3 of the JCS identifies the scale of housing to be provided in the rural areas at about 2,360 net additional dwellings in the period up to 2029. The Council has confirmed that, as of January 2016, the housing requirement for Daventry District has been met. This has not been disputed by the appellant.
11. Development Plan policy as set out in Policy R1 of the JCS, Policy RA1 of the DSCLP and the Brixworth Neighbourhood Development Plan 2011-2029 does not preclude additional residential development, over and above the specified housing requirement, in village locations, subject to certain criteria. The criteria include, amongst other matters, a requirement for the development to be of

small scale, in harmony with its surroundings, and to provide support to existing services and facilities.

12. Although the appeal proposal is considered to be small scale, it would for the reasons set out above, cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would not result in an environmental improvement to the area. Whilst I acknowledge that the proposed development would provide some support for the local community and services, the contribution 2 dwellings would make would be limited. This limited benefit would not outweigh the significant harm to the character and appearance of the area that would result from the proposed development.
13. In light of the above I conclude that the appeal site is not a suitable location for residential development because of the conflict that arises with the spatial strategy for the area. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with Policy R1 of the JCS, Policy RA1 of the DSCLP and the NDP which jointly support developments that result in environmental improvements and are in harmony with their surroundings.

Other Matters

14. The permission granted for the erection of a detached dwelling establishes the principle for residential development on the site. It is however unlikely that the scheme before me is the only option that would enable the site to be developed and provide the environmental improvements required by the Council.
15. I acknowledge that Brixworth Parish Council supported the application. However, in the absence of any reasoning behind their decision I am able to give this matter only limited weight.
16. Although the National Planning Policy Framework says that planning decisions should support development that makes efficient use of land, this is subject to taking into account, amongst other things, the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens). This is not the case here for the reasons set out above. Moreover, it says that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.
17. The Appellant has expressed a desire for two three-bedroom dwellings rather than the approved four bedroom dwelling based on specific housing requirements for Brixworth. Whilst acknowledging that the West Northamptonshire Housing Market Evidence 2017 indicates a need for three-bedroom houses for the period 2016 to 2029, and the Council have indicated general support for the provision of this type/size of house, the benefit of providing dwellings of this size does not outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusion and Recommendation

18. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Gunn

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

19. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR