

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 December 2020

by Andrew Smith BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 06 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2830/W/20/3259337

82 Winston Crescent, Brackley NN13 7DZ

- 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 & Mrs S Harding against the decision of South Northants District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2020/0042/FUL, dated 25 December 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is Single Dwelling with Associated Internal and External Works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Since the refusal of planning permission, the South Northamptonshire Part 2 Local Plan 2011-2029 (the LPP2) was adopted by the Council in July 2020 and can now be afforded full weight in decision making. Both main parties have had the opportunity to make comments upon any implications of this for the determination of this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The effect upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is, for the most part, comprised of a strip of unenclosed land positioned to the side of No 82 Winston Crescent (No 82), an end-of-terrace property that is located within a modern residential estate. Regardless of whether or not the strip of land in question comprises residential garden land, it is of grassed and open makeup.
5. The residential estate typically contains various similarly designed blocks of terraced or flatted residential properties. These blocks are often positioned on consistent building lines and tend to be setback from the highway. Indeed, various grassed and open areas exist to the sides and frontages of properties. A formal, spacious and often green residential character and appearance thus exists.

6. I am aware of an October 2019 appeal decision¹ at the same site that related to proposed development of the same description. In dismissing that appeal, the Inspector identified that the intended dwelling would materially reduce the sense of space provided by the site such that the scheme would have a detrimental impact upon the character and appearance of the area. In comparison, the proposal that is before me relates to a dwelling of reduced width and amended design.
7. Indeed, based upon its reduced extent, the Council has confirmed that it no longer has concerns with respect to the proposed development's intended encroachment into grassed areas, and I am considering the appeal on this basis. I also note that the proposed new dwelling would be respectful of No 82's ridge height, external facing materials and front and rear building lines. Furthermore, the front and rear facing window openings that are proposed would be broadly respectful of the size and position of other window openings that already serve both No 82 and the wider terrace.
8. Nevertheless, the new dwelling would be noticeably narrower when compared to No 82 and to each of the other dwellings that makeup the terrace. Indeed, the front-facing elevation would accommodate merely a single opening at both ground and first floor levels whilst the intended main point of access would be positioned to what would be a readily visible street-facing side elevation, as opposed to the property's frontage. Such arrangements would be uncharacteristic of how properties in the local area are typically comprised and laid out.
9. It is also the case that a chamfered rear boundary treatment and on-site car parking space make up part of the proposal, despite concerns previously raised in these respects by the Inspector in October 2019. The chamfered extent of the proposed rear boundary treatment has been reduced (when compared to the previous scheme) and I have also taken into account the positioning of boundary treatments that are already in place along Churchill Way nearby. Nevertheless, the proposed parking space and chamfered rear treatment would not sit entirely comfortably within an area where I have identified a formal, spacious and often green residential character and appearance to exist.
10. In overall terms, the proposed development would be read and experienced as a discordant and somewhat contrived addition to the terrace and to the wider local area.
11. Planning permission² was granted by the Council in May 2017 for a two-storey side extension to No 82. Its width, as approved, is similar when compared to the proposal now before me. However, the scheme previously granted permission was successfully designed to appear and function as a subservient extension rather than as a new unit of self-contained living accommodation. The May 2017 planning permission is thus of limited relevance to my considerations here.
12. For the above reasons, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal conflicts with Policies SA and H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) (December 2014) and Policies LH1, SS2 and SDP1 of the LPP2 in so far as these policies

¹ APP/Z2830/W/19/3232946

² S/2017/0934/FUL

require that new development makes a positive contribution to the built and natural environment. For the avoidance of doubt, Policy SDP2 of the LPP2 is of limited relevance as it relates specifically to residential and upward extensions.

Other Matters

13. I acknowledge that, as far as I'm aware, no objection to the scheme has been raised by any nearby residential occupier. However, it remains my responsibility to consider the proposal against the full suite of evidence that is before me and in the wider public interest.
14. I am satisfied that acceptable living conditions for future occupiers would be created, that the intended private garden space would be suitably sized and that no harm would be caused in a highway safety context. These matters weigh neutrally in the planning balance.
15. In terms of the scheme's benefits, an additional residential unit is proposed, and the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) reaffirms the Government's objectives of significantly boosting the supply of homes and making effective use of land. Nevertheless, the provision of a single additional unit would not make a noticeable difference to the District-wide housing supply situation and is a benefit that attracts limited weight.
16. The scheme's benefits would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area and associated policy conflict that I have identified. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Andrew Smith

INSPECTOR