The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 November 2020 by Ben Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

Decision by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

An Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0121/D/20/3258971
48 Greenhill Road, Sandford BS25 5PB

- 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 Peretz against the decision of North Somerset Council.
- The application Ref 20/P/1132/FUL, dated 27 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 22 July 2020.
- The development proposed is described as the change of use of the existing dwelling to form two self-contained dwellings, together with formation of the parking area.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons for Recommendation

4. The appeal site is prominently located on the corner of Greenhill Road and Helens Road in a residential part of the settlement of Sandford. The dwellings along both Helens Road and Greenhill Road have some variety in their appearance, however both are characterised by detached, mostly single storey dwellings. The properties along Greenhill Road, the main thoroughfare through the settlement, are generally larger and in more spacious plots. Whilst there is no definitive defined building line, these dwellings are set back from the road providing a sense of space. Helens Road is characterised by more modest bungalows in smaller plots.

5. The application property has recently been extended to create a large 4 bed bungalow and sits within a smaller plot compared to the general plots along Greenhill Road, having considerably less outdoor garden space than nearby properties.

6. The proposed development would result in semi-detached properties, the form of which would be discordant with the character and appearance of the area. The separate parking area and front doors of which would draw attention to this incongruous form of development.

7. Furthermore, the proposed subdivision of the existing plot into two separate dwellings would result in each property having a garden area which would be substantially smaller than the prevailing pattern of development in the locality. The proposed gardens would be located to the side of the dwellings which would be at odds with the prevailing character of the area. Moreover, the resultant northernmost dwelling, would, due to its location, be seen in the context of Greenhill Road, notwithstanding that it would be accessed from Helens Road. This property would appear cramped due to the restricted plot size and would be out of keeping with the general spacious pattern of development along Greenhill Road.

8. My attention has been drawn to semi-detached dwellings at Nos 69 and 71, however these are set in larger plots and do not appear out of keeping with the general pattern of development. As such they are not directly comparable with the scheme before me. I acknowledge that there are examples of development on smaller plots along Helens Road, however the garden areas are largely to the rear of the dwellings that they serve.

9. I have had regard to the views of the Inspector who determined the recent appeal[1] on the same site for the erection of a new detached bungalow on a similar footprint. She found that the detached bungalow would be 'squeezed' into the site and would detract from the character of the area. Although this proposal involves semi-detached dwellings, I find that the concerns raised by the previous Inspector have not been overcome.

10. In light of the foregoing, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development conflicts with Policy CS12 of the North Somerset Council Core Strategy and Policies DM32 and DM37 of the North Somerset Council Development Management Policies Sites and Policies Plan Part 1 which collectively require development to be of a high standard of design and does not adversely affect the character of the area. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which requires at paragraph 127 that developments, amongst other matters, are sympathetic to local character and establish or maintain a strong sense of place.

11. The Council also reference the Supplementary Planning Document 'Residential Design Guide - Section 2 Appearance and character of house extensions and alterations', however, have not identified to me the relevant section. As such, I am unable to assess the proposal against this document.

Other Matters

12. I acknowledge that the development would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers neighbouring dwellings, that adequate living conditions for future occupiers would be provided, along with sufficient off-street parking. However, this would be expected of any well-designed development and does not weigh in favour of the proposed development.

13. The Council accepts that it is not able to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. This represents a housing shortfall. In such circumstances, paragraph 11 d) of the Framework indicates that permission should be granted unless certain circumstances apply.

[1] Appeal reference APP/D0121/W/18/320478

14. The benefits of the scheme include an additional dwelling which would make a contribution to the Council's supply of housing, which would be located close to shops and services. Economic and social benefits are also likely to arise from the occupation of the new dwelling. However, given the quantum of development in this case, such benefits would modest.

15. The harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area would conflict with the development plan and the Framework and are matters to which I attach significant weight. Whilst the proposal would deliver benefits, I find that they would be significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the adverse impacts of the environmental harm identified. Therefore, in the circumstances of this appeal the totality of the other material considerations does not justify making a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

Recommendation

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

B Phillips

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

R C Kirby

INSPECTOR