
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 January 2020

by Mr Ben Plenty BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th February 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/U2805/W/20/3260452
220 Kingsthorpe Avenue, Corby NN17 2QB

- 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 J Levine against the decision of Corby Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00017/DPA, dated 17 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is for an end terrace house adjacent to 220 Kingsthorpe Avenue.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matters

2. The Draft Local Plan for Corby (2019) (DLP) was recently subject to public examination. Policy 16 of the DLP is referenced in both of the Council's Reasons for Refusal. Accordingly, I have applied moderate weight to this policy.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the site and its surrounding area, and
 - the effect of the proposal on highway safety, with particular respect to the use of the access.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is located on a corner plot, at the junction of Kingsthorpe Avenue and Fotheringhay Road. Opposite the junction is a small commercial centre and includes three storey development. However, the majority of the local area consists of two-storey residential development in the form of terraced and semi-detached housing. Two storey flatted development is also opposite the site. The streetscene presents a relatively consistent building line, with built form set back a largely unified distance from the footway. Front gardens are mostly either open plan or enclosed by hedging, resulting in a strong landscape setting for most plots. The appeal site, on this relatively prominent corner, is enclosed by hedging. This visually connects the landscaped site to adjacent hedging along both adjacent highways.

Furthermore, the side elevation of the host dwelling broadly aligns with the front elevations of adjacent dwellings along Fotheringhay Road. Consequently, the appeal site makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.

5. The proposal seeks to locate a dwelling to the side of the existing end property. This would extend the existing line of terraced buildings towards Fotheringhay Road. Therefore, although following the building line of dwellings on Kingsthorpe Avenue, the proposal would demonstrably intrude into the linear streetscene of Fotheringhay Road. Furthermore, whilst its frontage relates directly to Kingsthorpe Avenue, the proposal would nevertheless also make a strong and inevitable contribution to the streetscene of Fotheringhay Road. Wandsford Place, opposite the site, includes built elements that are set closer to the highway than neighbouring developments. However, these are set some distance behind landscaping. These therefore do not establish a broken building line. The proposed dwelling would therefore be a discordant feature as viewed from both its front and rear elevations, especially when travelling along Fotheringhay Road.
6. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would be extremely close to the footway of Fotheringhay Road. It would also result in the provision of a new driveway alongside the drive of the existing dwelling. These interventions would require the removal of a large section of side hedging. The effect of this would be to emphasise the appearance of the proposal and its discordant impact on the existing open and planted corner. The retention of the small section of frontage hedging would not adequately address this harmful visual impact. The National Planning Policy Framework (The Framework) seeks decision makers to support the development of under-utilised land, but this also requires account to be had to achieving well designed places. Consequently, the proposal would be an overt and harmful addition to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.
7. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to satisfy policy 8(d) of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 (2016)(CS) that requires development to respond to a site's immediate and wider context and local character. Also, the proposal would not accord with draft policy 16 of the DLP. This seeks, amongst other things, to allow dwellings within gardens of existing dwellings where the form, height and layout would be appropriate to the surrounding pattern of development. These policies are generally consistent with the Framework which seeks development to be sympathetic to the local character of an area.

Highway safety

8. The proposed access would be likely to result in vehicles reversing onto Fotheringhay Road. Both Fotheringhay Road and Kingsthorpe Avenue are through roads with a 30mph speed restriction. Furthermore, both roads include speed bumps to regulate the speed of local road users. The proposed driveway would be relatively close to the junction and opposite lay-by parking for the commercial centre. The proposed access would be alongside a relatively flat and straight section of highway, affording clear and unobstructed views in both directions.

9. Although the parking would be to the rear of the dwelling, it would not be so remote as to discourage its use. The Highway Authority¹ refer to local parking pressure. However, during my visit whilst only providing a snap-shot in time, on street parking appeared to be readily available. Consequently, the street would have adequate parking capacity to accommodate demand for overspill parking. The layout makes no provision for on-site turning to enable a vehicle to exit in a forward gear. Nevertheless, this is common to many driveways in the local area. The highway provides good visibility for vehicular users of the access. Furthermore, the highway would largely consist of traffic moving at moderately slow speeds. As a result, the use of the access, and manoeuvring onto the highway, would not have an adverse impact on highway safety.
10. As such, the proposal would satisfy policy 8(b) of the CS which seeks to make pleasant streets and spaces by resisting development that would prejudice highway safety. Furthermore, the proposal would accord with policy 16 of the DLP which seeks new dwellings to include provision for safe and convenient access.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons in regard to character and appearance, the appeal is dismissed.

Mr Ben Plenty

INSPECTOR

¹ Highway Authority comments 09/04/20