



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 9 March 2021

by R Sabu BA (Hons), BArch, MA, Pg Dip ARB RIBA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22nd March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/K1935/W/20/3264328

330 Canterbury Way, Stevenage, SG1 4DU

- 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 Mrs Jean Hayden against the decision of Stevenage Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00146/FP, dated 10 March 2020, was refused by notice dated 11 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is new dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. While I note the name on the application form, since one name is stated on the appeal form, the appeal proceeds on this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the proposal would provide a suitable living environment for future occupiers with particular regard for internal amenity space and external private amenity space;
 - whether the proposal would provide adequate parking provision; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers of No 326 Canterbury Way (No 326) with particular regard for outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The area surrounding the site is characterised by two storey terraced dwellings with similar widths, forms, materials, height and roof pitch such that the area has a pleasant unified feel.
5. The site lies at the end of a terrace and is occupied by one of two joined garages. The proposal consists of the demolition of the garage on the site and erection of a dwelling which would have a significantly reduced width compared to the surrounding dwellings. The building would also have a staggered plan,

resulting in a stepped elevation and roof, further emphasising the narrow width of the proposal resulting in an incongruous appearance. While the form and style may appear domestic, given its narrow width and staggered roof form, the scheme would appear at odds with the unified feel of the area.

6. In addition, the scheme would have narrow private amenity spaces at the front and rear of the property which would be roughly half the width of the proposed building. As such, the proposed building would appear overly large for the size of the plot, thereby harmfully departing from the prevailing unified pattern of development.
7. Consequently, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would conflict with Policies SP8, HO5 and GD1 of the Stevenage Borough Local Plan 2011-2031 Adopted May 2019 (LP) which together require the highest standard of design, development that respects and makes a positive contribution to its location and surrounds and results in no detrimental impact on the environment. It would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) in this particular regard.

Living environment

8. The floor area of the proposed dwelling would fall short of the requirements of the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard March 2015 (NDSS). As such, it would conflict with LP Policy SP8 which requires developments to implement the Government's optional Technical Standards.
9. I acknowledge that the bedroom would exceed the requirements, and the dwelling may meet the standards had it been a flat. However, the ground floor area would be likely to be occupied for substantial parts of the day and given the restricted dimensions of the ground floor spaces, it would result in a living environment that would feel oppressive. Therefore, the space would have limited usability and would not be adaptable for changing needs.
10. The external amenity spaces would be split between the front and rear of the property. The Stevenage Design Guide: Supplementary Planning Document September 2009 (SPD) states that the minimum standard garden space for a terraced or semi-detached family dwelling should normally be 50 square metres. Since the proposal includes only one bedroom, it would not be a family dwelling and therefore does not directly conflict with the SPD in this particular respect. While the rear garden depth would be less than 10m and not particularly spacious, given the limited number of future occupiers, the space would be fit for purpose.
11. Consequently, the proposed development would not provide a suitable living environment for future occupiers with particular regard for internal amenity space. Therefore, it would conflict with LP Policy GD1 which requires, among other things, developments to meet the NDSS.

Parking provision

12. The Parking Provision and Sustainable Transport SPD Adopted 2020 requires that one-bedroom properties provide one parking space. While the submitted drawings indicate a parking space, this lies outside the red line and the Appellant has confirmed that it lies outside their ownership.

13. While I note the Appellant's evidence regarding the parking space, there is no mechanism before me which secures the use of the parking space for the future occupiers of the development. As such, there is no certainty that the parking space would be dedicated to the proposed development.
14. Accordingly, it is likely that the scheme would result in on-street parking. Given the lack of on street parking spaces in the area, the narrow width of the road, and the position of the site at a turning head, the proposal would result in increased instances of dangerous and obstructive parking, such as on footways or across driveways, to the detriment of the free and safe flow of traffic. As such, the proposal would result in an unacceptable impact on highway safety.
15. Consequently, the proposed development would not provide adequate parking provision. Therefore, it would conflict with LP Policy IT5 which seeks, among other things, developments that comply with the requirements of the Parking Provision Supplementary Planning Document. It would also conflict with the Framework in this particular regard.

Living conditions

16. The separation distance between the flank wall of the proposed scheme and the rear of No 326 would be less than the figure stated within the SPD. However, the SPD states that the minimum distances should be achieved unless the design of the new buildings mitigates against any overlooking. Since there are no windows proposed in the flank wall, no overlooking to No 326 would occur. Accordingly, the scheme would not directly conflict with this requirement.
17. The proposal would be visible from the rear windows of No 326 and would result in a flank wall appearing closer to this property than the existing arrangement. However, there would still be a reasonable distance between the properties such that the neighbouring occupiers would continue to benefit from outlook in other directions. As such, the proposal would not unduly affect the outlook of these neighbouring occupiers.
18. Consequently, the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers of No 326 with particular regard for outlook. Therefore, it would not conflict with LP Policies SP8, HO5 and GD1 in this particular respect which seeks, among other things, development that would not lead to an adverse impact on neighbouring uses and surrounding properties and to have regard to Supplementary Planning Documents.

Other Matters

19. I note the evidence regarding the sustainability of the location. However, given the harms identified above, this has not altered my overall decision.

Conclusion

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

R Sabu

INSPECTOR