
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 August 2021

by J P Longmuir BA(Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 2 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D3125/W/21/3272587

79 Milestone Road, Carterton, Oxon OX18 3RL

- 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 Balliol Homes Ltd against the decision of West Oxfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/02416/FUL, dated 14 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is the removal of derelict care home and erection of 8 No.1 bed flats with associated parking and access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 20 July 2021 after the submission of the appeal statements. Both parties were given the opportunity to comment on its changed significance or otherwise.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies on the outskirts of Carterton. Milestone Road is a pronouncedly long straight flat road, with wide grass verges. The road draws the eye along its length to appreciate the long views.
5. The houses are set back behind spacious front gardens, many of which have hedges and a scattering of trees. The houses are a mix of single storey and one and a half storey, with a minority at two storeys. The rooflines are broken by gables and offshoots.
6. The site includes a building which is in a dilapidated condition following a fire in 2014 and vandalism. The adjoining building No. 81 is in a similar condition. The appeal site extends considerably to the rear and the grounds are rough grassland rather than discernible as garden. The house is one and a half storeys high.

7. The proposal involves the creation of a car park to the frontage. The 11 parking spaces and their access/turning area would be an extensive expanse which would look out of place with other frontages which typically have limited parking and gardens.
8. The front elevation would occupy almost all the width of the appeal site, at two storey height. Additionally, the roofline would be continuous and unbroken. This would look dominating and bulky whereas the surrounding houses are typically low, fitting comfortably within their space and have broken massing.
9. The proposal would attract attention and detract from the strength of the view along Milestone Road.
10. I note that the ridge heights between the existing and proposed would be similar, but the eaves heights are markedly different at 2.4m and 4.7m respectively. As a result, the new building would look disproportionate in that the roofline would not be balanced by the walling. I note that the suggestion of amending the scheme to hipped ends which would ease the perception of the massing, but that would not sufficiently remedy the impact to the streetscene.
11. I note that 6 flats have been approved but that front elevation has a very different massing and provided more landscaping to the frontage. I saw on my site visit that No. 83 is two storeys, but I find that does not reflect the predominate character of Milestone Road.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area.
13. Policies OS2 and OS4 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan require development to be proportionate and appropriate in scale to the context and have high quality design. The West Oxfordshire Design Guide provides criteria on how to understand a site and its context and how to respond sympathetically. Paragraph 126 of the National Planning Policy Framework requires the creation of high quality, beautiful and sustainable buildings and places. Paragraph 130 requires that development is sympathetic to local character. The proposal would be in conflict with the above policies and guidance.

Other matters

14. The site is derelict and brownfield. It is also in a location accessible to facilities without dependency on private car use. I also note that development is allocated to the rear. All these factors point to the desirability of development, but the design still needs to be in keeping. Similarly, the dwellings would contribute to housing land supply, but I note that the Council is meeting its requirements and therefore only give this very limited weight. I therefore find that the benefits of the development do not outweigh the harm.

Conclusion

15. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR