



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 May 2022

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st May 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/21/3287353

16 Pound Close, Hail Weston PE19 5JT

- 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 Seymour against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 21/01984FUL, dated 25 August 2021, was refused by notice dated 22 October 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-bedroom bungalow and associated works.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues relevant to this appeal are:
 - the effect of the developments upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - whether appropriate cycle storage could be provided within the development.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is located to the rear of an existing house. This is a semi-detached dwelling and is constructed to a comparable design to other houses in the surrounding area. A feature of dwellings in the street is that they are arranged in a linear pattern. Furthermore, they have a direct frontage onto the highway. In addition, views of trees to the rear of dwellings are possible. This gives the vicinity an open character that harmonises with the rural surroundings of the settlement.
4. In contrast, the proposed dwelling would be of a single storey and detached. This means that it would conflict with the prevailing character of the surrounding area owing to the difference in height and form. In addition, the proposed dwelling would clearly be of a back land type.
5. In result, the proposal would appear incongruous given that the surrounding dwellings have a direct frontage onto the surrounding highway. This would conflict with the prevailing character of generally linear dwellings. In addition,

- whilst not visible from the entrance to the cul-de-sac, the proposed dwelling would be visible for sections of the road.
6. In addition, a feature of the existing dwellings is the presence of space surrounding them. In contrast, the proposal would result in a diminished amount of space to the rear of the existing dwelling. This means that the character of space surrounding dwellings would be eroded by the proposal.
 7. Although the evidence before me indicates that some outbuildings were previously sited at the property. However, these were not of the same scale as the proposed development and have since been demolished. In result, they cannot be attributed a large amount of weight in my considerations.
 8. The proposed development would be of a single storey. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with the prevailing character given that existing dwellings are generally constructed to relatively uniform proportions.
 9. These matters are of concern given the general prominence of the appeal site. In addition to views from the street which would be possible via the access way into the development, the proposed development would be readily perceptible from several different properties in the nearby vicinity. This includes a terrace located in the nearby High Street.
 10. In reaching this view, I have had regard to the fact that many of the existing dwellings are of two stories. This means that views into the appeal site would be readily apparent from the upper floor windows of the neighbouring dwellings. In consequence, the incongruous form of development would be readily perceptible and therefore the proposal would be a strident addition to the surrounding area. This would occur even though new boundary treatments could be installed and that the appeal site is located inside the built-up area of the settlement.
 11. I understand that some of the existing dwellings have been subject to alterations over time. Whilst this means that some of these have appearances that differ from their original design, I find that such alterations are generally of a small-scale and therefore are not divergent from the prevailing character. Therefore, such alterations do not overcome my previous concerns.
 12. The proposed development would be constructed from materials that would be complimentary towards the surrounding area. Whilst this is a matter of note, it would not overcome the previously identified adverse effects.
 13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the proposed development. The development, in this regard, would conflict with the requirements of Policies LP9, LP11, and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (2019) (the Local Plan); and the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017) (the SPD). Amongst other matters, these require that development is sustainable in relation to the effect on the character of the immediate locality; respond positively to its context; and be well designed based upon a thorough understanding of constraints and appraisal of the site's context

Cycle storage

14. The proposed development features a dwelling driveway and garden area. the garden area would be adjacent to the driveway and to the rear of the house.

There is the potential for external entrances into the garden from the areas to the side and to the rear of the dwelling.

15. In considering this appeal I have been directed towards planning policies that seek to ensure that developments are not solely reliant on private cars as a means of travel. Therefore, there is a requirement that cycle storage is provided in order to ensure that residents of the developments have a suitable alternative.
16. The proposed development does not feature such storage. However, the proposal does include a garden that is accessible without requiring access to the dwelling. Therefore, the development could be constructed in such a way so as to provide usable cycle storage within the curtilage of the proposal.
17. This is because occupiers of the development would be able to have direct access between garden and driveway which would remove the inconvenience of potentially having to take a bicycle through the dwelling.
18. Although not shown on the submitted plans it would be possible to impose a condition that would secure an appropriately sized structure for the use of bicycle storage. This condition could be drafted in such a way so as to ensure that it is provided throughout the life of the development.
19. The provision of additional cycle storage would result in an increase in the overall level of built form. However, the evidence before me is not indicative that any such cycle storage necessarily should be of an overly large scale given that the proposed development would only contain two bedrooms.
20. Therefore, it would not necessarily lead to an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area or indeed the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties. I have also noted the presence of other small outbuildings in neighbouring properties.
21. In consequence, imposition of such a condition would not lead to a breach of any other adopted planning policy and, in result, would allow for the provision of appropriate bicycle storage.
22. I therefore conclude that the development could be constructed in such a way so as to provide appropriate bicycle storage. The development, in this regard, is in conformity with the requirements of Policy LP17 of the Local Plan, and the SPD. Amongst other matters, these require that developments provide at least one secure cycle space per bedroom; and that any such cycle storage that is provided is secure.

Other Matters

23. The development is unlikely to have an adverse effect upon matters including highway safety, flood risk and biodiversity. Whilst these are matters of note that weigh in favour of the proposed development, they are only some of all the points that must be considered and therefore do not outweigh my previous concerns.
24. I note that in devising the current scheme, attempts were made to address concerns raised in respect of a previous, withdrawn, planning application. Although this is a matter of note, it does not overcome my findings in respect of the first main issue.

Conclusion

25. The proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. This would outweigh the fact that the development could include appropriate cycle storage. The scheme would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the preceding reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Benjamin Clarke

INSPECTOR