



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2022

by Martin Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 June 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/P1615/W/22/3291154

Land at Lynwood, Highfield Road, Bream, Lydney GL15 6JB

- 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 Lisa Symonds against the decision of Forest of Dean District Council.
 - The application Ref P0883/21/FUL, dated 6 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 24 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached dwelling with associated garage, parking, landscaping and works. Erection of a detached garage for existing dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site predominantly occupies an area of land associated with the existing property of Lynwood, that is currently occupied by a single-storey double garage. It is this part of the site that would be occupied by the proposed dwelling. There is an additional area of appeal site further to the south on the other side of the existing property, which would be occupied by the proposed detached garage for the existing dwelling.
4. The dwellings within the vicinity of the appeal site form a cohesive cluster of development that is visually well contained by their plots. Lynwood and its directly adjacent property sitting alongside form the northern extent of the built development comprising of dwellings at this location. Within the appeal site, there is a single storey garage, however this building is of a lesser scale than the dwellings and it sits at a lower level than them. Furthermore, there are intervening garden areas. As a consequence, the appeal site comprises a transitional area between the larger built form of the dwellings and the undeveloped countryside beyond, which also includes areas of forest. This is particularly appreciable when approaching the site from both directions along Highfield Road.
5. Additionally, the site lies within a designated Locally Distinctive Area (LDA), with a key feature of this area being that properties are often sited in larger plots with visual permeability through the settlement. I observed the

development within this part of the LDA to be well-contained, with an observable edge to two-storey buildings. As I set out above, the single storey garage in part of the appeal site, together with the relatively open nature of its surroundings which is formed from garden, serves to provide a low-scale transition between the dwellings and the surrounding land.

6. The appeal scheme would result in the construction of a new, two-storey dwelling in close proximity to two existing properties. While I note that there are examples of dwellings positioned close together in the area, the proposed would amplify this and given that I identify above that the site is important due to it contributing to the transition between built form and open land, the introduction of a dwelling here would result in a cramped and intrusive form of development. It would serve to erode the contribution that the site currently makes to the LDA and appear as a discordant element within the settlement. That works have taken place at an adjacent dwelling does not persuade me that the appeal site can satisfactorily accommodate the proposed development.
7. I note the findings of the submitted Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment, which concludes that the landscape and visual effects would be slight. However, for the reasons I set out above, I consider this understates the effect that the development would have.
8. Accordingly, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with policies CSP.1 and CSP.4 of the Forest of Dean Core Strategy and policies AP 1, AP 4 and AP 6 of the Forest of Dean Allocations Plan. Together, and amongst other things, these policies seek to ensure that development takes account of important environmental characteristics, that the environment is protected, that development is of a high design quality and that within Locally Distinctive Areas development should complement established character. The scheme would also conflict with the design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
9. The Council's decision notice refers to the Residential Design Guide, however no specific conflict with this document has been identified by the Council. Nonetheless, I have found conflict with the policies of the development plan as identified above.

Other Matters

10. The parties agree that the Council is currently unable to demonstrate a five-years supply of deliverable housing sites. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as envisaged by paragraph 11 of the Framework is engaged. However, the scheme would result in the delivery of only a single dwelling and thus the benefits resulting from it, which would include social and economic benefits, would be very limited. Consequently, I find that the adverse effects of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Accordingly, this matter does not indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.
11. I acknowledge that there would be benefits to the appellant and family, in terms of accommodation being provided in close proximity to the appellants family members, as well as that the dwelling would be self-build. The scheme would also contribute towards the provision of new housing, and would be

designed to include environmentally sustainable features. However, these matters also does not outweigh the harm I identify.

12. I note that no objection is raised to the proposal on the grounds of effect on highway safety, living conditions of nearby occupiers, flood risk or biodiversity. Also, it has been contended that the addition of the dwelling would increase the value of surrounding properties. These are however neutral factors, that weigh neither for nor against the proposal.
13. Reference is made to other developments being permitted in the area. However, I have no detailed information in respect of these cases. There is also mention of there previously being four dwellings at this location, however this is historic and is not what exists today. Thus, these matters have little bearing on my decision.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR