



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 July 2022

by A J Sutton BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/21/3283491

Chestnut View, School Lane, Quinton, Northampton NN7 2EA

- 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 S Chalcraft, Georgian House Developments against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref WNS/2021/0614/FUL, dated 18 May 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 July 2021.
 - The development proposed is erection of 2no. dwellings (Resubmission of S/2020/1276/FUL)
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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 comprises a large plot in the village, which at the time of the site visit contained a two-storey detached dwelling. The surrounding garden space is relatively open and was not bound by fences or landscaping to the front.
4. Development on School Lane near the centre of the settlement is fairly close knit. However, in the vicinity of the appeal property, where the Lane gently curves to the south, the area is characterised by detached dwellings of individual designs in generally large plots. The resultant loose pattern of development gives a distinct sense of spaciousness. I saw that the variation in roof heights between single and two storey dwellings also contributed to the sense of space on both the eastern and western side of the Lane and this is a positive feature of the area.
5. The proposal would replace the existing three-bedroom dwelling with two four-bedroom detached properties. This would result in the formation of two relatively narrow plots. The gap between the respective dwellings would appear small when compared with neighbouring built forms and this would be at odds with the pattern of development in this area.
6. The Council's Design Guide suggests no fixed minimum distance between the side of dwellings, but this is in respect to protecting the amenity of adjoining residential development. This aside, the scale and the width of the proposed dwelling at plot 2 has been reduced from that which was proposed as part of a

previous scheme that was dismissed on appeal.¹ It would also be stepped in from the shared boundary with Rosebank. However, the gap between the two proposed dwellings would be similar to the previous scheme.

7. This gap would be similar to that which exists between Rosebank and Lawers. But in that case, the height of those dwellings varies considerably, and this helps retain a sense of space. Although the dwelling at plot 2 would be 1½ storeys, the pitched roofs of both proposed dwellings and their first-floor gables would be similar in both height and width, and these substantially sized built forms would be positioned close together. The proposal would be distinctly different from Rosebank and Lawers in this regard, and the proposed sizeable built forms would appear squeezed and cramped in the site in comparison with surrounding development as a result. In turn this would significantly and detrimentally erode the distinctive spacious character of the area.
8. I have had regard for the subdivision of plots in the area. Spring Risings is a bungalow in a large plot and therefore not directly comparable with this proposal. I also observed the permitted changes to that plot were not appreciable in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site. The Oaks has a small plot, but this appears an exception in this part of the street scene. More significantly there is a sizable space between the pitched forms of that property and its neighbour, Lowbell, and this is in keeping with the general sense of spaciousness in this part of the Lane. For these reasons, this example does not justify a proposal which would harmfully diminish this positive feature.
9. The proposed landscaping would improve the appearance of the site and the development with regards screening the off-street parking space to the front of the dwellings. However, a landscaping scheme would not sufficiently screen the incongruous proximity of the two built forms and therefore a condition would be ineffectual and unnecessary. In any event this benefit could be achieved with a proposal that is less harmful than this.
10. In light of the above I find that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would in this regard conflict with Policies SS2 and LH1 of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 and Policies H1 and R1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) which, amongst other matters, seek to maintain the individual identity of villages and their distinct parts, and collectively require a design-led approach and that development would not result in harm to the character of the area.
11. It would also be inconsistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks well-designed places, and the guidance set out in the South Northamptonshire Design Guide which seeks to maintain a high quality of development within the district.

Other Matters

12. The principle of residential development at this location is not in dispute, nor is the architectural appearance of the proposed dwellings or the garden space, but this should be expected for all such development. The Council concludes that there would be no harm to the living conditions of local residents. I see nothing to question this conclusion, but again it is expected that development

¹ Appeal Ref APP/Z2830/W/20/3260687

should not result in harmful effects. Accordingly, these are neutral factors in this case.

13. The proposal would support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and would add to the mix of houses in the area. But this would be a small benefit given the scale of the development. The Framework provides support for small sites, and this proposal would make an efficient use of land, but I have found that it would not maintain the area's prevailing character. It would not be suitable for this reason, and therefore this matter would not weigh in favour of this appeal. Unlike the Middleton Cheney appeals² the benefits are therefore limited in this case and would not be sufficient to outweigh the harm identified in respect to character and appearance.
14. There is dispute between the main parties as to the extent of the Council's housing land supply. Although there was a shortfall at the time of the Rothersthorpe appeal³, evidence from both parties indicates that it now exceeds 5 years and I find nothing to doubt this. Therefore Paragraph 11 d) of the Framework and the presumption in favour of sustainable development is not triggered in this case. This aside, the Framework states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development. I have found harm in this respect and therefore the proposal would not be sustainable development.
15. Local plan policies that are not a matter of dispute have been highlighted. However, I have found this proposal would be harmful and would conflict with the development plan when read as a whole.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons stated above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole and to all other material considerations, including the Framework, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A J Sutton

INSPECTOR

² Refs APP/Z2830/W/20/3259839 and 3281483

³ Ref APP/2830/W/18/3206346