



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 March 2023

by Jonathan Bore MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3 April 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Z2260/W/21/3284098

Woodhatch, George Hill Road, Broadstairs, Kent, CT10 3JU

- 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 D Kingham against the decision of Thanet District Council.
 - The application Ref F/TH/20/1737, dated 4 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 1 April 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of two 3 bed and three 4 bed two storey detached dwellings with associated car ports, parking and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the scheme on the maintenance of the Green Wedge and the separate identity of the Thanet towns, and the effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

The effect of the scheme on the maintenance of the Green Wedge and the separate identity of the Thanet towns

3. The site is a residential plot on the southern side of George Hill Road. Aside from Woodhatch itself, it is largely undeveloped, consisting of garden, paddock, outbuildings and an avenue of trees. The site is adjacent to some glasshouses and a small number of houses, but the overall character of the area south of George Hill Road is mostly open. There is extensive agricultural land to the west and south of the site and to the east of the glasshouses. This area has a much less developed character than the built-up area of Kingsgate north of the road. The adopted Thanet Local Plan designates the land to the south of George Hill Road, including the appeal site, as Green Wedge, the purpose of which is to maintain a clear visual break between the Thanet towns, thus retaining their recognised structure and identity. The Local Plan's countryside policies apply to this area.
4. The site is long and extends some distance into the Green Wedge, and the proposed scheme would involve the development of the whole site. Fronting the road, dwellings 1 and 2 would be seen in the context of the dwellings either side, but they would have the effect of consolidating development and undermining the objective of keeping the Green Wedge largely undeveloped. Dwellings 3, 4 and 5 would be situated towards the back of the site and would be close to its boundaries with little intervening amenity space or space for

planting. Even allowing for the glasshouses immediately to the east, they would be widely visible as a harmful visual intrusion into the Green Wedge, eroding its effectiveness as an area of separation and undermining its purposes. The whole scheme would therefore be contrary to Policies SP24, SP25 and SP26 of the Local Plan and Policy BSP1 of the Broadstairs and St Peter's Neighbourhood Plan, which taken together seek to protect the countryside and Green Wedges and to retain the distinction between town and countryside.

The effect of the scheme on the character and appearance of the locality

5. The three dwellings towards the end of the site would have a cramped layout, with gardens disproportionately small for the size of house and side or rear elevations very close to the open land beyond the site. A consequence of the cramped layout can be seen in the poor relationship between the dwelling on Plot 3 and Woodhatch, with potential intervisibility between windows and garden, resulting in loss of privacy and unsatisfactory living conditions for the occupiers of both homes. The form and layout of the development would be out of character with the spacious nature of the area, contrary to Local Plan Policies QD02 and QD03, which protect local character and encourage compatible design of high quality.

Other Matters

6. The district does not have 5 years' supply of deliverable housing land, so the decision-making balance described in Paragraph 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is applicable. However, the Green Wedge continues to fulfil an important strategic purpose as part of the development plan's spatial strategy for the district by maintaining the separate identity of the Thanet towns and protecting an important open area which is vulnerable to piecemeal erosion. The scheme would cause significant harm to the objectives of the Green Wedge policy, to the appearance and integrity of the Green Wedge, and to the character and appearance of the locality. It would conflict with Chapter 12 of the NPPF which seeks development which is sympathetic to local character and maintains a sense of place. The harm that would arise from the scheme would significantly outweigh the benefits in terms of the provision of additional homes.
7. The developments and appeal decisions referred to by the parties relate to different schemes and sites with dissimilar characteristics. The current appeal scheme has been dealt with on its merits.

Conclusion

8. I have considered all the other matters raised, including the unilateral undertaking concerning mitigation measures in respect of the Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Area, but they do not alter the balance of my conclusions. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Jonathan Bore

INSPECTOR