
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2023

by Benjamin Clarke BA (Hons.) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/22/3309439

92 Gordon Road, Little Paxton PE19 6ND

- 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 Saied Mahmoud against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00020/FUL, dated 5 January 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2022.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of existing garage and erection of a new, separate two-bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. The application was refused planning permission for two different reasons. However, subsequent to the making of this appeal, the Council has confirmed that the submission of an updated Unilateral Undertaking is sufficient to overcome the second reason for refusal. Accordingly, the main issue relevant to this appeal is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site consists of an existing detached bungalow within a predominantly residential area. Although the surrounding area features dwellings constructed to differing designs and proportions, a notable feature of the vicinity is the presence of open areas and the setting back from boundaries of buildings. This gives the appeal site and the surrounding area a more open and suburban character.
4. The proposed development would result in the insertion of a new dwelling that would be attached to an existing bungalow. Owing to the proportions of the proposed dwelling and the confines of the appeal site, the proposed development would result in building works taking place in proximity to the site's boundaries.
5. Although not isolated, the appeal site maintains an open appearance that is consistent with the wider suburban character of the surrounding area. In result, the proposed development would erode this characteristic of the vicinity by reason of the expanse of built form that would take place near to other developments. The development would therefore result in a more urbanised form.

6. In addition, the development would have the effect of creating a pair of semi-detached dwellings. Owing to the differences in form between the existing and proposed dwellings, there would be no degree of symmetry between the two buildings. This is a concern as a notable feature of semi-detached dwellings elsewhere in the vicinity is that such dwellings are symmetrically arranged.
7. Although some of the semi-detached dwellings that are located in the surrounding area are constructed to differing designs, each pair predominantly retains the sense of symmetry. This is a feature not present in the appeal scheme.
8. In addition, although some of the nearby dwellings feature elements of built form close to side boundaries, these are typically of a single storey only. This is not a feature of the appeal scheme, which would be two storeys in height near to one of the side boundaries. These factors render the appeal scheme incongruous.
9. In reaching this view, I have had regard to the landscaping that is present at the appeal site and on neighbouring properties. However, these are of relatively small scale and therefore would not offer any significant degree of screening.
10. Therefore, the proposed development would appear discordant and incongruous given that it would be notably divergent from the prevailing character. This is of particular concern given the overall prominence of the appeal site. In addition to views from neighbouring properties, the development would be readily perceptible from several different vantage points in the surrounding area.
11. In consequence, the proposed development would be readily experienced by a large number of people. This means that the proposed development would be of an incongruous and strident nature.
12. My attention has been drawn to a variety of developments elsewhere. I do not have the full planning circumstances of these before me, which means that I can only give them a limited amount of weight. Nonetheless, I note that, in general, these alternative developments are located in differing areas and have contrasting relationships with neighbouring properties and have different levels of prominence. It therefore follows that the effects of the existing developments elsewhere do not allow me to disregard my previous concerns as the impacts differ.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The development, in this regard, would conflict with the requirements of Policies LLP11 and LLP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (2019) (the Local Plan). Amongst other matters, these seek to ensure that new developments respond positively to its context; and contribute positively to the area's character and identity.

Other Matters

14. The evidence before me is indicative that the proposed development would not have an adverse effect on matters including heritage assets, flood risk, living conditions and highway safety. Whilst these are matters of note, they are only

some of all the matters that must be considered. Therefore, these matters do not allow me to disregard my previous findings.

Conclusion

15. The proposed development would have an adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The scheme would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, which 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

