



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 April 2023

by K Townend BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25th May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/W/22/3310373

6 Chapel Road, Weldon, Northants NN17 3HP

- 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 Nick Bowditch of Loraine House Construction Ltd against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NC/22/00023/DPA, dated 3 April 2022, was refused by notice dated 30 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is change of use of single dwelling into two dwellings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety, having particular regard to parking provision and vehicle movements.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is an existing 5-bedroom detached dwelling on Chapel Road with its side elevation and garden facing onto Lorraine Gardens. The existing house has a pair of garages and two parking spaces in front of the garages, accessed from Lorraine Gardens.
4. Beyond the appeal property are three other properties on Lorraine Gardens. Nos.8 and 8a Chapel Road lie with their side elevations directly onto Lorraine Gardens with No.8 accessed off the junction with Chapel Road. The immediate area is close-knit with houses along narrow roads and in small groups.
5. I accept that the proposed change of use would not increase the number of bedrooms. However, there is no substantive evidence that the number of bedrooms is directly related to the number of vehicle movements or cars associated with a house. The appellant has provided photographs of a few larger dwellings with several cars outside, however this does not provide sufficient evidence that smaller dwellings generally have less cars, or that larger houses generally have more.
6. I also accept that the proposal would ensure that there are no more than five dwellings off Lorraine Gardens, however the number of units is not the only means of ensuring the living conditions of neighbouring residents remain acceptable. Each of the units would also need to be provided with sufficient parking and manoeuvring provision.

7. Even though there is no increase in bedrooms, the proposal provides one additional dwelling and would, therefore, have an associated increase in vehicle movements from the occupants, visitors, and deliveries. Given the close-knit character of the area, the limited space within Lorraine Gardens and the limited on-street parking on Chapel Road I saw on my visit, the proposed additional dwelling would increase parking demand and vehicle movements. This would create additional noise and disturbance which, given the proximity of the other properties would result in detrimental harm to the living conditions of the neighbouring residents on and adjacent to Lorraine Gardens.
8. The Northamptonshire County Council Northamptonshire Parking Standards, 2016 (NCCNPS), sets the parking requirements as a figure per dwelling. For housing developments of 2 or 3-bedroom units the NCCNPS advises 2 parking spaces, plus 1 visitor space, is required per dwelling. The proposed development would therefore require 6 parking spaces.
9. The appellant has sought to argue that the proposal provides 6 parking spaces. However, this relies on the use of garages which the NCCNPS advises are often used for purposes other than parking and, for that reason, advises not to include garages as designated parking within developments. Even if the garages could be restricted to be kept available for parking of a car, the garage would be blocked by any car parked in front of it, owing to the tandem layout of the parking provision proposed.
10. Furthermore, the provision of 2 visitor parking spaces, to meet the requirements of the NCCNPS, also relies on tandem parking. This would not be an acceptable arrangement for visitor parking for two separate dwellings. The NCCNPS also advises against the use of tandem parking as it is inconvenient for residents. The proposed parking provision, for two dwellings, would therefore be cramped and undesirable.
11. The appellant has advised that there are currently 6 parking spaces at the property and therefore there is no change in the parking provision. However, at the time of my visit the area between the garages and the end of the house was enclosed in fencing and there was only 1 space available adjacent to the existing parking spaces. The current parking provision on site, of 5 spaces, including the garages, complies with the NCCNPS requirement of 3 parking spaces plus 1 visitor space for properties that are 4-bedroom or more.
12. Unlike smaller dwellings the Council advises that garages can be counted as providing parking spaces for larger dwellings. The NCCNPS advises that garages are often inconvenient for regular day-to-day parking and often used for purposes other than parking. The current 5-bedroom property benefits from the 2 parking spaces in front of the garages and the third, and fourth, space within the garage. The proposal, albeit not increasing the number of bedrooms, is increasing the number of dwellings and the NCCNPS requires parking to be provided per dwelling.
13. The lack of objections from the Council Highway department does not equate to support; or show that the development is acceptable in this regard. The Council Highway department has provided comments, including noting that the use of garages as parking for 2 and 3-bedroom units is not acceptable.
14. The aim of the NCCNPS is to ensure that every development is provided with an appropriate level of parking. The proposal would not accord with the

requirement of the NCCNPS as it would not provide the required number of spaces and relies on the use of garages and tandem parking. The shortfall of parking, along with the increase in vehicle movements, would result in greater demand for parking on Lorraine Gardens and Chapel Road.

15. Although the proposal would not result in severe residual cumulative impacts on the road network when assessed against paragraph 111 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the scheme would not provide sufficient parking provision, considering the advice in the NCCNPS. Moreover, there is some evidence from third party representations of parking saturation in the immediate area. Increasing pressure on this by allowing development with inadequate on-site parking provision could thus result in harm to highway safety.
16. For the reasons given above I, therefore, find that the proposal would result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers and highway safety, having particular regard to parking provision and vehicle movements. Accordingly, the proposal would fail to comply with Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy, 2016, which, amongst other matters, seeks to ensure that development makes safe and pleasant streets through ensuring satisfactory provision of parking and manoeuvring space and seeks to protect the living conditions of neighbouring properties.

Other Matters

17. The appeal property is within the Weldon Conservation Area. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (as amended) provides, at section 72(1), that with respect to any buildings or other land in a conservation area special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character, or appearance of that area.
18. There is no dispute between the parties that the proposed physical works to the property, which would be minor in nature, would have an adverse effect on the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Having considered the proposal and visited the site I concur with that view. Accordingly, it is my view that the development proposed would preserve the character and appearance of the designated area.
19. That there are no issues between the main parties with regard to character and appearance of the area is a neutral issue and does not weigh in favour of the proposal. The development would also provide one additional dwelling, but, due to the scale of the development, the benefit is limited.
20. I acknowledge that the Council did not submit a statement of case and therefore did not respond to all the points raised in the appellant's statement of case. However, the Council are entitled to rely on the officer report as evidence of their case at appeal. I have not given any weight to the lack of a statement from the Council in my decision. The appellant has also sought to argue that the Council placed disproportionate weight to the objections received. However, the Council's case, as set out in the officer report, is clear and the decision was made against the development plan.

Conclusion

21. For the reasons given above, the proposal would, therefore, be contrary to the development plan as a whole. There are no other material considerations that would indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

K Townsend

INSPECTOR