



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by D Wilson BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 08 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M2840/W/22/3304986

4 Victoria Close, Rushden, Northants NN10 0DG

- 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 Iftikhar Ahmed against the decision of North Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref NE/21/01849/FUL, dated 20 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as "the door between the main house and granny annexe has been closed to allow the annexe to be rented. It is proposed that the annexe becomes an independent bedroom dwelling of 54m². Floor plan attached. An area of 67m² is provided to the east of the property as a private garden with space for waste bins and recycling containers. 2 parking spaces are provided in front of the property."
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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 surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Victoria Close is a small cul-de-sac located in a primarily residential area with a school and care home nearby. 4 Victoria Close (No 4) is a large two-storey dwelling which is similar in appearance and size to the other dwellings on Victoria Close.
4. Most of the dwellings on Victoria Close have large, attached double garages. No 4's attached double garage has previously been converted for use as a granny annexe.
5. I note that the volume of occupancy would remain the same and no external alterations to the building are proposed. However, at present there is no clear separation from the dwelling and as such the annexe remains part of No 4 and the large plot which is characteristic of the area remains.
6. The proposal would introduce fencing, with presumably a new entrance, to the side of No 4 to create a new garden for the proposed dwelling and result in a clear separation from No 4. This would alter the appearance of the property and distinguish it as a separate dwelling and due to the small size of the plot, it would stand out as a cramped and contrived feature in the context of the much larger dwellings and plots in Victoria Close.

7. A separate parking area is proposed for the new dwelling and whilst I appreciate this already exists, it is not unlikely that it would be divided from No 4 by some means. This would further contribute to the proposal standing out as a cramped and contrived feature on the street scene.
8. I acknowledge that the appellant does not intend to split the property however the nature of an independent dwelling would remove the reliance on No 4 and therefore result in a separation and split from No 4.
9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would be contrary to Policy 8 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy 2011-2031 and Policy EN1 of the Rushden Neighbourhood Plan made 4 June 2018 which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that the form of development is appropriate to the surrounding density and pattern of development.

Other Matters

10. I have no reason to conclude against the Council's assessment that the proposal would be located in a suitable location for residential development, that it would not result in harm to the living conditions of neighbouring properties and meets the nationally described space standards¹.
11. I note that the annexe was designed with easy access, wide doors and a large bathroom. Also, that the Council has identified a need for a balance of property sizes and types to meet market demands including houses designed for older people. The dwelling could therefore help towards addressing the housing requirements of these groups and contribute to providing additional housing in the area. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have identified.
12. I acknowledge that no objections were received by Rushden Town Council, Highways, Environmental Protection, Waste and only one neighbour objected out of those that were notified. However, this is not itself a reason to allow this appeal.
13. The appellant considers that off-road parking is an issue in the area and that other dwellings on Victoria Close have more limited parking than the proposal. However, as no increase in parking would be provided, the proposal would not result in an improvement in this regard.
14. The appellant suggests that the proposal is a temporary measure and that there is no local demand for a large property with an annexe. The proposal before me is not for a temporary period and in any case, there is no evidence of a lack of demand for large houses.
15. The appellant refers to an annexe located at 2 Victoria Close that is being used as a separate dwelling without planning permission however this is a matter for the Council to investigate and does not mean that the proposal in front of me is acceptable.

¹ Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard, Department for Communities and Local Government March 2015

Conclusion

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

D Wilson

INSPECTOR