

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 May 2023

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 June 2023

Appeal Reference: APP/Y2810/D/22/3301395

Land at 'Su Ju Jan', Bunkers Hill, Badby NN11 3AW

- 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. G. Dickens against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application (reference WND/2021/0953, dated 22 December 2021) was refused by notice dated 22 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as a "Single-storey front extension with new drop kerb".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issues

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surroundings.

Reasons

3. Badby is an attractive historic village, located in the Northamptonshire countryside, south of Daventry. The older parts of the village have an historic appearance but some modern development has also taken place. Parts of the settlement pattern are somewhat loose-knit and Bunkers Hill extends westwards towards its junction with the A361 main road, which bypasses the village.
4. There is a mixture of development along Bunkers Hill, including a plant nursery and various residential properties. On the north side of the road a small cul-de-sac has been laid out, serving an enclave of bungalows that are similar in style and scale (although different from each other in detailed design) but rather modern in character, with a strong horizontal emphasis in the architecture and with extended footprints (sometimes in an "L-shaped" form). The bungalows are on good-sized plots but they are irregularly laid out, which no obvious "building line".
5. The bungalow at 'Su Ju Jan' is set back from the roadway and footpath of the cul-de-sac, as are the other bungalows, although the size and disposition of

- their front gardens vary. Some have front gardens that are planted with mature trees or shrubs but the enclave has an open character, nevertheless.
6. The unusually large front garden at 'Su Ju Jan' is very open in appearance, laid almost entirely as a lawn, with a drive that provides access to a double garage attached to the front of the dwelling, projecting forwards from it.
 7. It is now proposed to construct a single-storey front extension to the bungalow, to provide new bedrooms and bathrooms. The existing accommodation would be reordered and the existing garage would be reoriented to a new garage door on the front elevation. In turn, this would require the creation of a new drive and a new dropped kerb at the edge of the highway.
 8. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, by adding to the overall quality of the area and being visually attractive and sympathetic to local character and history, although it is also recognised that appropriate change may include increased densities. The achievement of good design includes providing good standards of accommodation.
 9. Policies in the Development Plan also share these basic principles. In particular, Policies ENV2, ENV10 and RA2 of the 'Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) For Daventry District 2011-2029' (which was adopted in February 2020) and Policy S10 of the 'West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1)' (which was adopted in December 2014) are intended to promote good design and to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment, among other things. Policy B1 of the 'Bradby Parish Neighbourhood Plan Made Version' (dated January 2019) includes an intention to maintain the scale, form and character of the existing settlement in broader terms.
 10. The Council's "Supplementary Planning Guidance for Designing House Extensions" is also relevant but it does not have the force of the statutory Development Plan.
 11. The existing building on the appeal site is set well back from the road and a modest forward extension would not be out of place in its context, in principle. In this case, however, the proposed extension would project well beyond the front of the existing garage (as shown on the application plans) and would occupy a large proportion of the front garden, extending close to the roadside. The open nature of the existing plot would be lost and the property would be visually more insistent in the streetscene. Properties around the cul-de-sac have a relatively unobtrusive character at present but the character and appearance of the cluster would be undermined by the change.
 12. The existing cul-de-sac has a somewhat suburban character at present and is not particularly distinguished as townscape. Some change could be accommodated, no doubt. Nevertheless, the scale of the proposed forward extension would be so substantial that it would encroach seriously on the open aspect of the existing layout and would harm the character and appearance of

the immediate surroundings in a way that would undermine the identifiable sense of place in this part of Bunker Hill.

13. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established residential development, which is “sustainable” in planning terms (even though it is at the edge of the village) and the proposed extension would make a useful addition to the existing dwelling, creating a more practical home in spite of some drawbacks to the layout. The project would not have a material adverse effect on neighbours’ amenities. Nevertheless, I am convinced that significant harm would be done to the character and appearance of the surroundings and that this outweighs the potential benefits of the project.
14. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me would conflict with both national and local planning policies (including the Development Plan) and that it ought not to be allowed. Although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C. Shrimplin

INSPECTOR