



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 June 2023

by S Harrington MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/23/3315081

Fyfield, Valley Road, Hughenden Valley, Buckinghamshire HP14 4PP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Terry & Sharon Hodson against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council – West Area (Wycombe).
 - The application Ref 22/07655/OUT, dated 30 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2022.
 - The development proposed is for a single building plot, being part of the rear garden of the applicants dwellinghouse, and facing onto Trees Road, Hughenden Valley, Bucks.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The application was submitted in outline form with all matters reserved for later approval. I have therefore also dealt with the appeal on this basis, treating any details of reserved matters shown on the plans as being illustrative only.
3. I have taken the description of development in the banner heading above from the application form. However as 'Outline Application' and 'All matters reserved' are not an act of development, I have removed these elements.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site consists of the garden and property known as Fyfield and is in a residential area within the settlement of Hughenden Valley. The host property is located on a corner plot thereby fronting Valley Road, with the rear garden maintaining a frontage with Trees Road. The Council state that Hughenden Valley is identified in the Council's settlement strategy as a suitable location for incremental growth from limited infilling, and therefore accept the principle of the proposal. I see no reason to disagree with this assessment.
6. I observed that the wider surrounding area features some variety in terms of scale and design of dwellings including detached, semi detached and single storey properties, and note the appellant's comments relating to house prices. Whilst plot sizes within the area also vary, the positioning of dwellings within their plots in the immediate area, are largely set back from the highway behind front gardens or parking areas.

7. While I note the appellant's comments in relation to the appearance and form of surrounding housing not being uniform, the positioning of dwellings within their plot, particularly to the western side of the appeal site along Trees Road, provides a largely consistent build line. Although I accept that the southern elevation of Fyfield is in close proximity to Trees Road, thereby at odds with the build line described above, as this property fronts Valley Road, it is not visually read in conjunction with other properties that do front Trees Road.
8. The combination of a relatively consistent set back of built form, roadside boundary planting, and the comparatively generous plot sizes of some surrounding properties, further contributes to a distinctive pattern of development and spacious residential character of the immediate area.
9. The Design and Access Statement (DAS) explains how the proposal would have a conventional but individual appearance, with a modest garden area and garage with car space in front. Although the appeal site incorporates both Fyfield and its garden area, indicative plans illustrate a proposed two-bedroom chalet bungalow development within the existing rear garden area.
10. I observed that the garden, which currently accommodates various outbuildings and a large garage, whilst potentially providing a wide area within which to accommodate a dwelling and associated garden, is restricted in terms of depth when viewed from Trees Road. Therefore, noting the outline nature of the proposal, any built form would need to be accommodated within a rather constrained plot, limiting the potential layout of the built form.
11. Notwithstanding that matters of access, appearance, landscaping, layout and scale are reserved, the proposal would result in a development, which in order to accommodate a vehicular parking and garden area would inevitably be further forward in its respective plot than other dwellings elsewhere within Trees Road. Furthermore, although I observed the variety of scale dwellings and plots in the wider area, a dwelling on this site, by virtue of its position within, and being constrained by site depth, and resultant modest associated garden area, would appear cramped and somewhat incongruous when entering Trees Road.
12. I therefore find that the proposal would not appear as a logical and natural infill development as is put to me by the appellant, but a scheme which would result in a cramped appearance, at odds with the prevailing pattern of development of the area. Consequently, the proposal would erode the spaciousness and character of this residential area.
13. Therefore, whilst the proposal in this location would not conflict with the Council's spatial strategy, I have found the proposal would harm the overall character and appearance of the area. This would result in a conflict with policies CP9 and DM35 of the Wycombe District Local Plan (2019). These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure development is of high-quality design that optimises the density of development while respecting and improving the distinctive character of the area. The proposal would also be contrary to guidance within the Housing Intensification Supplementary Planning Document (2011) and Residential Design Guidance (2017) which seek to ensure development is of sufficiently high quality and character that fits well into, and contributes positively to the area. The proposal would also be contrary to the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework in relation

to achieving well-designed places which are visually attractive and of an appropriate density.

Other Matters

14. Although the effect of the proposal on neighbouring living conditions due to overlooking was not raised as a reason for refusal, I note both the main parties and interested parties' comments in this regard. While built form would be in close proximity to some boundaries, I note the DAS refers to the positioning of windows in order to reduce any detrimental impact. Given the outline nature of the proposal, I find that if planning permission were to be forthcoming, this is a matter which could adequately be dealt with during consideration of reserved matters.

Planning Balance

15. The appellant has highlighted a high demand for housing in the area which cannot be met because of environmental constraints. However, the Council states that it can demonstrate a five-year housing land supply for the area and nothing within the evidence before me leads me away from the Council's position. Notwithstanding, there is no doubt that the benefits of the proposal include an additional dwelling towards housing supply.
16. Other benefits put to me include the removal of the existing garden outbuildings and existing hardstanding area. However, these buildings and hardstanding are modest and have limited impact on the visual appearance of the street scene and I therefore afford this limited weight. The appellant has also outlined various benefits of the proposal within the planning and appeal statements, including the 'sustainable' location of the site close to services and facilities, lack of harm to the Green Belt or the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and effective and optimum use of land.
17. Notwithstanding these, I find that the benefits of the proposed scheme would be limited in scope and scale. In my view, such matters either individually or in combination do not outweigh the identified harm and the associated development plan conflict described above.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would conflict with the development plan, read as a whole. No material considerations, individually or cumulatively, indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

S Harrington MA MRTPI

INSPECTOR