



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2023

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X1925/W/23/3316168

6 Sparhawke, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4PX

- 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 Ben Leete against the decision of North Hertfordshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/03008/FP, dated 16 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as “providing good affordable accommodation to the local area, land at the rear of 6 Sparhawke to be used for a 2 bed bungalow with parking and a garden”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Sparhawke is a street with residential properties on one side and a school playing field on the other. The properties comprise terraced and semi-detached two storey dwellings of a consistent age and design, similar to neighbouring streets. Gardens at the rear back onto gardens for the next street and contain a variety of outbuildings. From the evidence before me, including my site visit, I am not aware of any residential development at the rear of Sparhawke.
4. The appeal site at 6 Sparhawke is an end of terrace property that has recently been extended and refurbished. Like other properties in the area, the rear garden is not particularly long or wide. It contains a small garage at the bottom. An access road to the side of the property leads to a group of garages. It is possible to see some of these garages from the roadside on Sparhawke.
5. The proposed bungalow would occupy the full width of the existing rear garden and more than half of its overall length. Two tandem parking spaces would replace the existing garage. While this is not an unusual parking arrangement, it would be a narrow and cramped space at the front of the new property. The use of a pergola over the proposed rear garden would provide privacy and is not an atypical garden feature. However, it would be a short garden compared to neighbouring properties and the size of the remaining garden for No 6 would also be much reduced.
6. The single storey nature of the new property would not be consistent with the height of existing dwellings. Although located at the rear and utilising materials

to match neighbouring buildings, the property would be visible from the roadside on Sparhawke as incongruous backland development. The access road is wide enough for vehicles to travel along, but nearby properties typically have access straight onto the street and so this would be an odd arrangement here. Even without public visibility, the property would be cramped and contrived and out of keeping with the local area.

7. The existing garages have little architectural merit and the loss of the garage on site would be acceptable. However, for the reasons set out above, the proposed building would not enhance the remaining garages. The modest economic and social benefits of providing a new dwelling in a sustainable location would not be outweighed by the adverse effects I have identified.
8. In conclusion, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, it would not accord with Policy D1 of the North Hertfordshire Local Plan 2011-2031 which, amongst other things, requires development to respond positively to the site's local context. It would also not accord with paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework which, inter alia, requires development that functions well, adds to the overall quality of the area, and is sympathetic to local character.

Conclusion

9. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR