
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 November 2023

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/H0520/W/23/3321151

78 Headlands, Fenstanton, Huntingdon PE28 9LW

- 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 Matthew Parsons against the decision of Huntingdonshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 22/02208/FUL, dated 21 October 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2023.
 - The development proposed is the subdivision of the existing site to create a new plot and erection of a 1 bed dwelling.
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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 area.

Reasons

3. The proposal is to subdivide the existing plot and to erect a one bed dwelling at No 78, a semi-detached bungalow on the corner of Headlands and Church Leys, part of a well-established housing estate. The new dwelling would extend the single storey design and materials of No 78 to one side to create a terrace of three properties, with No 78 becoming a mid-terrace property. An existing side conservatory built onto the gable end of No 78 would be demolished.
4. There are no objections to the design of the new dwelling as this would match No 78 and its pair No 80 and would be consistent with the overall estate. However, the proposal would extend the front corner of the bungalows to just 900 mm from the footway turning the corner into Church Leys¹, significantly reducing the sense of space on the corner. This would draw attention to the relatively narrow width and small size of the plot in comparison with the average in the vicinity.
5. In addition, the proposal involves the loss of rear garden for No 78 fronting onto Church Leys and the creation of a parking space for the new property, adjacent to the driveway and garage to be retained by No 78. This would also increase the developed nature of the corner to the detriment of the overall character and appearance of the relatively spacious housing estate.

¹ Drawing no. 001B (1 of 2)

6. The appellant claims the conservatory is unsightly but it is in fact innocuous. Whilst exposed to view this results from the lack of any boundary enclosure along the side of the property or planting within the garden. The property has permitted development rights to extend to the rear, which would result in a larger footprint overall on the site, but this would not encroach onto the road corner in the same way or require additional parking. Mathematical density comparisons are therefore of limited value in this case. No 80 has been extended to the side but this projects towards the next property, No 82, not the road corner, and No 2 on the opposite corner has been granted permission² for a two storey extension to within 961 mm of the footway but if implemented this would be further from the corner and would not involve a new dwelling requiring a new driveway.
7. For these reasons the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the housing estate by reducing the sense of space on the corner and introducing a cramped additional dwelling. This would be contrary to Policies LP11 and LP12 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 2019 which require proposals to be well designed in relation to their context and to create built frontages that positively enhance the townscape. The reason for refusal also refers to three sections of the Council's 2017 Design Guide and the 2021 National Design Guide but the nature of the conflict is not explained.

Conclusion

8. The proposal would provide a small low-cost and accessible dwelling meeting the necessary space and amenity standards which would contribute to local housing needs and have economic and social benefits for the village. No objections have been received from neighbours and the proposal has been reduced in size from an earlier scheme. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm that has been identified to the character and appearance of the area and the associated conflict with the development plan.
9. Having regard to the above the appeal should be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR

² 21/01062/HHFUL