



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 December 2023

by Sian Griffiths BSc(Hons) DipTP MScRealEst MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 January 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/D/23/3329855

77 Woodlands Grange Park Northampton NN4 5BZ

- 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 Geoff Bunce against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref 2023/5418/FULL, dated 14 April 2023, was refused by notice dated 4 July 2023.
 - The development proposed is proposed front porch and garage. Extension and conversion of existing garage to habitable accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Government published on 19 December 2023 a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Neither the appellant nor the Council have made any further submissions regarding the revised Framework and I am satisfied that any references made to the revised Framework within this decision would not be unreasonable to the parties.

Reasons

3. The main issues is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and surrounding area.
4. Woodlands is a modern, suburban, residential development located to the south of Northampton. There are a variety of housetypes within the development, being generally detached or semi-detached and two storey with either separate, linked or integral garages and front gardens with private driveway parking.
5. The appeal property, No 77 is a detached, two storey dwelling set back from the road behind a front garden and driveway, with an integral garage. It has been subject to some alterations, including a loft conversion.
6. The neighbouring property, No 79 is of an 'L-shape' with a projecting double garage to the front elevation. This appears to be part of the original design.
7. The appeal proposals would result in a projecting front extension which would sit adjacent to what is the blank wall of the linked front garage arrangement serving the neighbouring property at No 79.

8. At the site visit, I noticed that there was symmetry in the street scene along this stretch of Woodlands, where different housetypes are laid out in a pattern. No 67 is an identical housetype to the appeal property and it is also adjoined by a housetype with an L shape with the same garage arrangement at the end of the 'row'.
9. Policy SS2 (General Development and Design Principles) (part 1.a.) of the South Northamptonshire Local Plan Part 2 (2020) (LP2) seeks to support development that '*maintains the individual identity of towns and villages and their distinct parts*'.
10. Part 1.b. of the same policy also seeks to support design-led development that integrates with the local character of the surrounding area particularly '*in relation to type, scale, massing, siting, form, design, materials and details*'.
11. The South Northamptonshire Design Guide (2017) (SPD) at paragraph 4.8 sets out that proposed development which would result in conflict with the character of the settlement would be unacceptable.
12. The Framework at para 8 (the social objective) seeks '*well designed, beautiful... places*', as well as para 135 which requires good architecture which is sympathetic to local character.
13. The appellant has drawn my attention to other dwellings within the street which have garages to the front of their principal elevations, some of which have been converted for habitable accommodation. I observed these as part of my site visit. I am not aware as to whether these were existing garages (as per the original design) or new developments and I have been provided with no further detail on each case that may have been put forward to justify these developments, so I am unable to comment any further. In any case, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.
14. The council have identified that the appeal proposals would be harmful to the symmetry in the existing street scene, and I agree. Given the scale of the projecting extension to the principal elevation (over 6m), it would represent a significant change in the appearance of the host dwelling and would, in my view, appear incongruous. This would result in harm to the character and appearance of not only the host dwelling, but also the wider street scene.
15. I find that the appeal proposals would therefore be contrary to policy SS2 (parts 1.a. and 1.b.) of the LP and the relevant parts of the SPD and Framework.

Other Matters

16. I have considered the appellants submissions that no third party objections have been received. However, this lack of objection is of neutral weight and does not alter the conclusions I have reached.

Conclusions

17. For the reasons given and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

Sian Griffiths

INSPECTOR