



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 April 2024

by E Dade BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7th May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/E2530/W/23/3329312

The Gables, Honington Road, Barkston, Lincolnshire NG32 2NG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr James Hodgkin on behalf of Electrical Installations Lincs Ltd against the decision of South Kesteven District Council.
 - The application Ref is S22/2073.
 - The development proposed is residential development to create four detached domestic dwellings, and renovation/enlargement of existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are:
 - the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area;
 - whether the development would provide suitable living conditions for future occupants; and
 - the effect of the development on the living conditions of occupiers of no 4 Thorold Gardens.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises an existing single storey dwelling in a large plot. To the rear of the site, two-storey dwellings and bungalows in long plots face Hough Road. To the south of site is Thorold Gardens, a modern cul-de-sac of two-storey houses, bungalows and chalet-style dwellings. Whilst there is a car dealership to the north, the surrounding area is predominantly characterised by residential uses, comprised of a mix of dwelling types in spacious plots.
4. The site is located at the settlement's edge, and there are views from the site's frontage across agricultural land beyond Honington Road, which contributes a green, open, and rural landscape setting.
5. The design of the plot 2 and 3 dwellings seeks to break up the overall mass of each building through variation in ridge heights and materials, providing a central two-storey section with lower side projections. However, the form of

the dwellings would create a wide frontage which would appear large in scale and mass, and visually dominant in the street scene.

6. Plots 2 and 3 would have short front gardens and the dwellings would be positioned close to the highway edge, situated opposite each other on either side of the access road. Due to the minimal separation from the street, coupled with the narrow width of the access road, the dwellings would appear uncomfortably close together. The proposed layout of the dwellings would appear cramped and of high density, and therefore the proposed layout would be out of keeping with surrounding dwellings which are generally set back from the street by generous front gardens.
7. The appellant indicates other similar development has taken place elsewhere within the village, namely to the rear of no 12 West Street. However, as set out above, the plot 2 and 3 dwellings would appear out of keeping with the scale, mass, and spacious layout of development in this location. The proposed development would therefore harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. The proposed development would conflict with Policies DE1 and SP2 of the South Kesteven District Council Local Plan 2020 (LP) which together require proposals be of an appropriate scale, density, and massing, given the context of the area, and not have an adverse impact on the street scene and not compromise the settlement's character. In addition, the proposal would fail to comply with LP Policy SP3 which supports development proposals which will make a positive contribution to the local distinctiveness, vernacular and character of the area.

Living conditions – future occupants

9. The designs of the plot 2 and 3 dwellings would represent a mirror image of one another. The dwellings would face each other on either side of the access road, with the narrow front gardens and road providing only limited separation. The close siting of the dwellings would result in the dwellings appearing visually prominent, thus providing poor outlook for future occupants.
10. The front elevations of plots 2 and 3 would front onto the street where there may be an expectation of occasional overlooking. However, the windows of first-floor bedrooms and ground floor habitable rooms would face each other, providing frequent opportunities for direct overlooking between the dwellings. The proposal would fail to provide suitable privacy, irrespective of whether future occupiers are aware of the arrangement prior to occupation.
11. Since I have been provided no evidence to illustrate the effects of the layout on sunlight and daylight, the proposal fails to adequately demonstrate the layout would not result in harmful overshadowing of the plot 3 dwelling.
12. The layout of the no 12 West Street scheme shows dwellings separated by a turning head, and therefore the layout of that scheme appears materially different from the appeal proposal and does not justify the proposed layout.
13. For these reasons, the proposed development would fail to provide adequate living standards for future occupants of plots 2 and 3.
14. The proposal would therefore conflict with LP Policies SP3 and DE1 which require development proposals not cause harm or unacceptable impact upon the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties.

Living conditions – no 4 Thorold Gardens

15. The rear elevation of the plot 2 dwelling would be oriented to face no 4 Thorold Gardens' rear elevation, which includes windows serving habitable rooms, and its back garden. The width of the plot 2 dwelling's rear elevation would exceed no 4's plot width. This would have an enclosing effect and create a perception of being overlooked, thus representing a significant visual change from the existing open character of the site.
16. Obscure glazing of bathroom windows and boundary treatments would limit overlooking to some extent. However, the wide rear elevation would comprise six windows at first floor level, including three windows at bedrooms and thus clear-glazed. Glazing at the ground floor would be extensive and would include large bi-folding doors serving the living room and kitchen/dining room.
17. The separation distance between the plot 2 dwelling and no 4 would marginally exceed the distance required by the Rutland and South Kesteven Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD indicates its standards are likely to apply in many places depending on site context, and by implication there may be circumstances where such guidance is not appropriate.
18. The design of the dwelling is atypical due to the scale of the rear elevation and the extent of glazing which would create opportunities for direct overlooking of no 4's rear-facing habitable rooms and garden. For these reasons, despite satisfying the SPD's separation distance standard, the proposal would result in both actual and perceived overlooking and would adversely impact on the privacy of the occupants of no 4.
19. The appellant refers to the layout of dwellings at the no 12 West Street scheme. However, I have been provided no details of the relationship between that scheme and neighbouring dwellings, and therefore I cannot be certain the effects of the development are comparable.
20. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would result in a loss of privacy which would harm the living conditions of occupants of no 4 Thorold Gardens.
21. The proposal would therefore conflict with LP Policy SP3 which requires development proposals not cause harm or unacceptable impact upon the amenity of occupiers of adjacent properties and is sensitive to the setting of adjacent properties.

Conclusion

22. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Therefore, for the reasons given the appeal should be dismissed.

E Dade

INSPECTOR