



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 November 2024

by E Worley BA (Hons) Dip EP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W2845/W/24/3343073

Yew Tree House, 3 Welton Park, Welton, Northamptonshire NN11 2JW

- 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 Ms Wendy Hansford against the decision of West Northamptonshire Council.
 - The application Ref is 2023/8006/FULL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of single dwelling.
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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. The appeal site comprises the side garden of Yew Tree House, a detached dwelling located within a cul-de-sac known as Welton Park, which includes a mix of detached 2 storey dwellings and bungalows. Notwithstanding the various designs, height, size and external materials, the considerable width of the plots gives rise to a sense of spaciousness which contributes positively to the character and appearance of the area.
4. The existing plot width of Yew Tree House to the road frontage is similar to that of the other dwellings in the cul-de-sac and reflects the regularly spaced layout of the development, with detached houses set on generous plots. It is typical of the type of development identified in the Welton Neighbourhood Plan made 2019 (WNP) for the area; *Character Area 3 - Welton Park, Clarkes Way and Halford Way*, which despite various extensions and alterations to the dwellings within Welton Park, remains prevalent.
5. The proposal would see the sub-division of the existing plot occupied by Yew Tree House, and the erection of a 2 storey detached dwelling alongside it. Consequently, the proposal would result in 2 dwellings sited side by side, with very limited separation space between their flank elevations. The introduction of a new dwelling in this position would result in a plot significantly narrower in width to the street frontage than the others in the cul-de-sac, including the host dwelling. In addition, the proposed dwelling would fill much of the width of the plot, and would also significantly reduce the extent of the frontage of the existing dwelling.

6. This arrangement would be inconsistent with the established layout and character of the nearby development and would appear incongruous. In addition, the proposal would introduce a noticeably localised cramped and denser form of development than that of the immediately surrounding area. Despite the curvature of the road, which may limit some longer distance views towards the site, the more limited width of the site frontage of the proposed dwelling, and that of the host property, would nonetheless be readily perceptible within the street scene when viewed from within the cul-de-sac, where it would appear as inconsistent with the neighbouring properties. As such, the proposed development would significantly erode the prevailing character and appearance of the area.
7. The Council has not raised any specific objection to the design of the dwelling, and the proposed boundary treatment to the front of the site could be designed to reflect more closely that of the dwellings nearby. Nevertheless, these aspects of the proposal would not override the identified incongruity and subsequent harm to visual qualities of the area I have identified. Moreover, while there may be other parts of the village where the character and appearance of the area is defined by variation in plot widths, the prevailing pattern in Welton Park is one of consistency by virtue of the characteristic wide plots.
8. For the foregoing reasons I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. In that regard it would conflict with Policy H1 of the West Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy Local Plan (Part 1) adopted 2014, which expects housing development to make efficient use of land having regard to the existing character and density of the area, Policies RA3 and ENV10 of the Settlements and Countryside Local Plan (Part 2) For Daventry District adopted February 2020 which require development to protect the form and character of villages, and to be of a high quality and reflect and integrate with the surrounding area and reinforce local distinctiveness. It would also fail to accord with Policy 1 e) of the WNP, which supports proposals for residential development where it is in keeping with its Character Area with regards to scale, layout and materials to retain local distinctiveness and create a sense of place.

Other Matters

9. The existing dwelling benefits from planning permission for additions to the property including a first floor extension over porch, single storey side and rear extension and a two storey side extension¹. The appeal submissions indicate that this permission is extant, as part of the development has taken place. Having regard to the evidence before me and established case law, I am satisfied there is more than a theoretical possibility that the remainder of the development, including the side extension, would be constructed in the event that this appeal is dismissed and therefore represents a realistic fallback position.
10. I appreciate that the side extension would reduce the open space between the existing side elevation of Yew Tree House and the side boundary of the site, and in that regard would be similar to the appeal scheme. However, the appeal proposal would be readily seen as a separate dwelling due to its detached nature, design, and plot demarcation, including the provision of a

¹ LPA reference DA/2012/0165

separate access and in that regard would be materially different to the extant permission to extend the property.

11. Furthermore, while I note the appellants contention that the proposed dwelling would be preferable to the extant permission in design terms, the extended property would not be visually at odds with others in the cul-de-sac, in terms of its appearance or overall scale. Nor would it be incompatible with the predominant character of the area, comprising generous dwellings with plot frontages of substantial widths. Therefore, the extant permission would not result in the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified. Consequently, as the fallback scheme would be less harmful than the appeal scheme, the weight to be attached to it is limited.
12. The proposal would offer benefits in terms of housing supply, which is a key objective of the Framework, which seeks to significantly boost the supply of housing. It would also be in a location where future occupiers would have access to amenities and facilities by means other than the private car and would offer economic benefits. Nonetheless, any benefits in these regards would be tempered by the scale of the proposal for a single residential unit.
13. While the Council has not raised an objection to the proposal in terms of the location, design, living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, highway safety or flood risk, the absence of harm in these regards does not weigh in favour of the scheme. Moreover, the inclusion of sustainability measures is an expectation of all new development, and as such is of neutral weight.
14. I note the appellants assertion that the situation has changed since the determination of an earlier appeal at the site for a similar development which was dismissed². However, I have determined the appeal based on the merits of the scheme and the evidence before me.

Conclusion

15. The proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. Material considerations have not been shown to carry sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be taken otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

E Worley

INSPECTOR

² APP/Y2810/A/08/2067867