



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 January 2025

by Jonathan Edwards BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 05 February 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J3720/W/24/3350012

25 Manston Drive, Wellesbourne, Warwickshire CV35 9TG

- 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 Lewis Locker against the decision of Stratford-on-Avon District Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/03170/FUL.
 - The development proposed is new 1 bedroom detached house on the land owned by 25 Manston Drive, Wellesbourne, Warwickshire CV35 9TG.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been issued since the appeal was lodged. The parts of the Framework most pertinent to my assessment remain largely unaltered and so I find no reason to seek comments from the main parties on the revisions.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is garden land that is vacant of buildings and at the end of a residential cul de sac. Manston Drive properties tend to be pairs of semi-detached, 2-storey high houses, all of which are of a similar height with pitched roofs and side gables. The uniformity in the appearance of the dwellings is a striking and fundamental characteristic of the cul de sac, even though the layout of the houses follows no regular pattern.
5. The front of the proposed house would be behind 25 and 27 Manston Drive and so it would not be prominent within the street scene. Nonetheless, it would be visible on the approach towards the end of the cul de sac, from the adjoining turning head and from nearby properties and gardens. Therefore, the development would have a noticeable, albeit fairly localised effect on the appearance of the area.
6. The proposed house would be markedly different in appearance to the other residences on Manston Drive. While it would be 2 storeys high it would have a mono pitch roof with only a slight slope. The external walls of the first floor of the building would not align with those on the ground floor so as to create cantilever overhangs to the front and to the rear. Moreover, the building would have an

irregular form as many of the walls would join at acute or obtuse angles rather than being perpendicular. Also, the house would be detached, so emphasising the peculiarity of its design amongst the semi-detached dwellings on Manston Drive.

7. The appellant contends the individual design of the scheme would add visual interest into an area where buildings are otherwise uniform in appearance. I note that pre-application advice provided by an officer from the Council was highly supportive of the design of the proposal for these reasons.
8. However, the starting point for the determination of this appeal is the relevant provisions of the development plan. Part C of Policy CS.9 of the Stratford-on-Avon District Core Strategy 2011 to 2031 (the CS) encourages design innovation but only where it reflects and complements the immediate local environment. The policy goes on to say that such an approach should be based on the characteristics of the surrounding built environment. In this case, the form and architecture of the proposed house would not meaningfully reflect any aspect of nearby residences. The use of external materials to match those on Manston Drive properties would not overcome the incongruity due to the irregular form of the proposed dwelling. The development would not respect the obvious uniformity of the immediate environment but it would be an unusual and inharmonious addition.
9. Cars on the parking area to serve the dwelling would not be unduly prominent within the street scene as they would be partially screened by neighbouring dwellings. Also, the appeal site is a similar width to other properties on Manston Drive and so from the road the house would not appear unduly cramped. However, the plot is significantly shorter compared to adjoining residences and the upper storey of the house would extend most of the distance between the front and rear boundaries. As such, when seen from nearby properties, the development would appear to fill a large part of the plot. Such views would be from private land but even so they would give an impression of there being little space around the building.
10. The appellant refers to examples where houses of unusual, contemporary styles have been approved elsewhere. However, the proposed development would not be compatible with the particular context to the appeal site. Instead, it would stand out as an unsympathetic addition at odds with the area by virtue of its unusual design and the apparent lack of space to the front and rear. Therefore, I conclude the development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. In these regards it would be contrary to CS policy CS.9 and policy WW9 of the Wellesbourne and Walton Neighbourhood Plan 2016 to 2031.

Other Matters

11. The appellant says the proposal would be a self-build dwelling but there is no planning obligation in place that restricts the occupancy of the development to the appellant. As such, there is no certainty that the initial owner of the house would have had a primary input into its design. Also, the planning application form indicates the dwelling would be an affordable home. However, there is no planning obligation before me that would control the tenure of the property so that it meets the definition of affordable housing as set out in the Framework. As such, I attach limited weight to these factors in my overall assessment.
12. Nonetheless, the proposal would contribute towards the overall housing stock and to the mix of dwellings in the local area. Also, it would be in a built-up residential

area where a new dwelling would be acceptable in principle. The proposal gains support from the Framework, which at paragraph 73(d) states that the benefits of housing development on suitable windfall sites within existing settlements should be given great weight.

13. At the same time, the Framework at paragraph 139 gives clear advice that development that is not well-designed should be refused. The evidence before me indicates the Council is able to demonstrate in excess of 5 years' supply of housing land as required under the Framework. Even if this is not the case, the benefits of the scheme are fairly modest given that only a single dwelling would be provided. When considering the Framework as a whole, the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development as set out under paragraph 11 of the Framework does not apply.

Conclusion

14. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations that indicate the appeal should be allowed. Therefore, I conclude the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Edwards

INSPECTOR