



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 February 2025

by **Andreea Spataru BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 March 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R1038/W/24/3351214

62 Hilltop Road, Dronfield S18 1UL

- 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 Shaw Developments (Sheff) Ltd against the decision of North East Derbyshire District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00058/FL.
 - The development proposed is described as 'proposed 4 number dormer bungalows with garages and 1 number two storey detached house with integral garage plots 1-5'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The address of the appeal site varies slightly between the application form, appeal form and the Council's decision notice. In the interests of precision, the address of the appeal site above has been taken from the Council's decision notice.
3. The appeal scheme has had several amendments during the application process. The Council's list of plans does not match the list of plans outlined within the appeal statement and there are some inconsistencies in terms of drawings' labels. Having requested and received further clarification, I have considered the appeal based on the list of plans on which the Council made its decision, in the interests of precision and fairness.
4. The appeal statement indicates that a separate planning application to refurbish and extend the appeal property has been submitted. The appellant requested that plots 4 & 5 should therefore be omitted from the appeal scheme. I have not been provided with full details of the new planning application. Nevertheless, in the interests of fairness, I have considered the appeal scheme based on the plans that were before the Council and which reflect the description of development for which the appellant applied.
5. Third parties have raised concerns regarding the ownership of the appeal site. However, there is nothing before me to indicate that the relevant forms and notices have not been completed.
6. Since the application was determined, a revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published on 12 December 2024. However, as any policies that are material to this decision have not fundamentally changed, I am satisfied that this has not prejudiced any party. I have had regard to the latest version of the Framework in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

8. The appeal relates to a bungalow located in a predominantly residential area. The appeal bungalow has two parcels of land to the rear: parcel A next to the rear elevation of the bungalow and parcel B extends over a larger amount of land which reaches Longacre Road. Neighbouring properties vary in terms of design, scale and materials. Their rear gardens also vary in terms of width and length. Notwithstanding the variety, the dwellings are generally well proportioned, of a simple and traditional design, and relate well to their surroundings.
9. The bungalows at plots 4 & 5 would sit in between two neighbouring bungalows, Nos 60 & 64 Hilltop Road, and would follow their building line. The proposed bungalows would have a depth larger than their width, which would lengthen the gable width to such a degree that the bungalows would appear disproportionate. The proposed bungalows are not directly comparable with the adjoining bungalows, as their original depth does not exceed their overall width. The space between properties would allow views of the side elevations, thus the elongated gables would be visible within the street scene. In addition, within the same visual context, the unusual roofs, which have a flat element at the top, would also be visible and would accentuate the depth of the properties and the bulk of the roof level. The misalignment of fenestration on the front elevations adds to the incongruity of the overall design. Accordingly, due to a combination of excessive depth, unusual roof style, and fenestration positioning, the proposed bungalows would fail to appear well proportioned and in keeping with the surrounding properties. The reduced ridge height and choice of materials are not sufficient to address the aforementioned incongruities.
10. The proposed dwellings for plots 1, 2 & 3 would be set back in relation to Longacre Road and neighbouring properties to the south-east to allow for front gardens and long private driveways. Given the staggered siting of the existing neighbouring properties on the northern side of Longacre Road, there is not a strong building line or an established pattern of development on this section of the road. As such, the siting of the proposed dwellings for plots 1, 2 & 3 is acceptable in this context.
11. Plot 1 would accommodate a two-storey detached dwelling, which would have a two-storey gable element at the front. The glazing proposed for the front gable contrasts the rest of the front elevation in terms of its excessive amount and its vertical placement. The fenestration unbalance is detrimental to the appearance of the dwelling and would be at odds with its immediate surroundings. I do not find the proposed detached dwelling directly comparable with No 2 Longacre Court, particularly because No 2 does not have the same vertical placement of windows nor the same amount of glazing. No 57 Longacre Road also differs in design from the proposed dwelling, as although it has a considerable larger amount of glazing than other neighbouring properties, the dwelling adopted a consistent vertical placement of glazing throughout its whole front elevation.
12. The dormer bungalows proposed for plots 2 & 3 would appear disproportionate due to the excessive bulk and mass at the roof level. The top-heavy design of the bungalows would be detrimental to their overall appearance and harmful to the

street scene. The appellant indicates that their design and style matches that of No 23 Longacre Road. Notwithstanding this, No 23 differs from the proposed bungalows, particularly because of its siting in relation to the street. No 23 sits at an angle with Longacre Road, thus its front elevation faces neighbouring property to its north, rather than Longacre Road, and its eastern gable is partly screened by a high hedge. Thus, notwithstanding the similarities in terms of design, No 23 does not have the same effect on the street scene as the proposed bungalows would have.

13. Given its overall size, the appeal site could accommodate the proposal without appearing out of keeping with the surrounding area in terms of density of dwellings and plots size, as the variety within the immediate area allows for a degree of flexibility. However, the proposed dwellings, for the reasons set out above, fail to demonstrate good design that is well related to its surroundings, particularly in terms of form, massing, scale and fenestration details. Accordingly, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. This is irrespective of the location of the appeal site outside a conservation area.
14. The appellant has also drawn my attention to several other properties in addition to those outlined above and I have taken into account the photographic evidence submitted. I also noticed the variety in terms of dwellings' design during my site visit and I acknowledge that the proposed dwellings include elements found in neighbouring dwellings. Nevertheless, it has not been demonstrated that the proposal before me is directly comparable with those properties. In any event, I have considered the proposal based on its own merits and site-specific circumstances.
15. In conclusion, I concur that the proposal would have a significant harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Thus, it is contrary to Policies SS7 and SDC 12 of the North East Derbyshire Local Plan 2021 and Policies HOU1 and D3 of the Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan 2019, which collectively require developments to respond positively to local character and context to preserve and, where possible, enhance the quality of their surroundings.

Other Matters

16. I have considered the submitted representations, and I note that some of them support the development. I acknowledge that the proposal would redevelop the site, which currently is partially overgrown. There would also be social and economic benefits resulting from the construction works, spend from future occupiers, and the addition of a mix of houses to the local housing stock. However, the nature and scale of the associated benefits that would flow from the scheme would be small and do not outweigh the harm identified above.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Andreea Spataru

INSPECTOR