



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 May 2025

by P Brennan BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 June 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R1845/W/24/3358257

Land Adjacent 65 Woodfield Street, Kidderminster DY11 6YB

- 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 N Jones against the decision of Wyre Forest District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/0593/FUL.
 - The development proposed is 1no. one bed bungalow.
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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 is a triangular plot of land that previously formed part of the private garden to 65 Woodfield Street (No 65). The site has subsequently been annexed by a boundary fence. The site sits adjacent to and fronts a public footpath that runs in a diagonal route from Woodfield Street to St John's Street. No vehicular access or car parking would be provided to the site as it can only be accessed on foot via the public footpath.
4. Woodfield Street, and St John's Street to the rear, are characterised by a mix of traditional and modern two storey terraced dwellings, located close to the footway. These have a regularised pattern with a strong and consistent front building line forming a perimeter block, with some variation in the size of properties. No 65 forms the end of a terrace of three properties that have a small hardstanding area to the front. Further along Woodfield Street, fronting Crowther Street, is Adams House, a two-storey sheltered housing scheme. Most of the dwellings, including Adams House, fronting Woodfield Street have a strong architectural vertical emphasis with tall and narrow associated fenestration. Due to its traditional form and consistent pattern of development, No 65 and the adjacent appeal site, make a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
5. The proposed dwelling would sit significantly behind the building line of Woodfield Street, within the former side and rear garden area of No 65. Accordingly, the proposal would have no direct functional relationship with Woodfield Street, due to the appeal site's location and the siting of the proposed dwelling. This positioning and relationship would be at odds with the prevailing street character and pattern of development.

6. Consequently, the proposed single storey dwelling would be a discernible departure from the prevailing two-storey character of the street and wider area. The dwelling would have a compact appearance that would fail to have regard to the scale, proportions and vertical emphasis of the adjacent dwellings. The proposed development would result in a dwelling that would be harmfully out of character with the existing dwellings in Woodfield Street and the wider surrounding area.
7. The proposed plot would be an irregular triangular shape which would not accord with the general rectangular gardens of the surrounding area. However, the public walkways through Woodfield Street and beyond run in directions at odds to the street pattern, leaving dwellings adjacent to them with irregular shaped gardens. As such, whilst the proposed development plot would be inconsistent with the predominant surrounding pattern of development, this would not in itself cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.
8. For the above reasons, the proposal would result in an incongruous development that would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of Woodfield Street and the surrounding area. Accordingly, I find conflict with Policies SP20 and DM24 of the Wyre Forest District Council Local Plan 2016-2036. These policies, amongst other things, seek development that exhibits high quality design which reflects the characteristics of the site, integrates effectively with its surroundings, reinforces local distinctiveness and complements the character of the area.

Other Matters

9. The appellant has drawn my attention to examples in the surrounding area that do not accord with building lines or do not have a relationship to the street. These examples are in Church Walk and Crowther Street. I have taken these into account in the assessment of the character and appearance of the area, as far as I am able to, based on my site visit and the information before me.
10. The dwellings in Church Walk, whilst being set back from the building line, are of the same proportions and scale as the surrounding development and successfully respond to the street. The Crowther Street example is one storey adjacent to a single storey dwelling at the end of a terraced street. It is also neighbours a single storey sports and social club. Both vehicular and pedestrian access is gained from Crowther Street. Accordingly, the properties referred to me are read in a different context to the appeal property and suit their local context. Therefore, there is no direct comparison to be made between these that weighs in the appeal's favour.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

11. The appeal site is within a defined settlement, close to services, where policies seek to make the most efficient use of land and support the provision of new housing in sustainable locations. The development would deliver one new house, supporting the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes.
12. There would be social and economic benefits associated with the proposal. The proposed dwelling could assist in meeting a housing need for smaller properties that are suitable for occupation by persons with mobility concerns. Furthermore, economic benefits both during construction, and from ongoing support for local services and facilities would also ensue.

13. The proposal has not raised matters of dispute with respect to drainage and flood risk; ecology and landscape; impact on neighbouring properties; highway safety and traffic generation. As such, no harm would arise from the proposed development in relation to these matters. However, an absence of harm in these respects can only be considered as neutral factors in the planning balance.
14. In environmental terms, no harm has been established and an 10.51% increase in biodiversity net gain can be achieved. The proposed development would also provide new ecological habitat features in the form of a house sparrow bird terrace. These benefits provide support, albeit of limited weight, in favour of the proposal.
15. Overall, the benefits of the proposal attract modest weight, but this would not outweigh the identified harm to the character and appearance of the area.
16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no material considerations that indicate that the development should be determined otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

P Brennan

INSPECTOR