



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 February 2026

by N Teasdale BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/X4725/W/25/3376186

Land opposite, 20 Maple Drive, Pontefract WF8 3QR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Sandra Flanagan against the decision of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/01715/OUT.
 - The development proposed is outline application for the erection of 1no. detached dwelling including access (all other matters reserved).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the above banner heading has been taken from the Council's decision notice as this accurately and concisely describes the proposed development.
3. The planning application is submitted in outline with all, but access reserved for a subsequent reserved matters application. Access details are shown on the Block Plan (Scale 1:500). On the same drawing, a possible layout for the dwelling has been shown. However, as the matters of scale, appearance, landscaping and layout are not being considered I have taken those details into account only in so far as establishing whether or not it would be possible, in principle, to erect a dwelling on the site.

Main Issue

4. The main issue of the appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a parcel of land within a grassed verge situated between Maple Drive to the west and the A639 (Hardwick Road) to the east in Pontefract. The site itself is relatively flat but raised above the A639. Mature trees are located to the south with a small amount of vegetation to the eastern boundary. The site is accessed from Maple Drive where dwellings are typically detached bungalows of a similar age and design.
6. The proposed development seeks outline planning permission for the erection of 1 no. detached dwelling including access, with all other matters reserved.

7. As referred to above, the site levels are set well above those to the east and above the A639. When approached from the north, the site is located in a highly prominent position and immediately visible within the street scene. When approached from the south, the site is partially screened by an existing dwelling (No.62 Maple Avenue) and mature trees, though again is highly prominent by virtue of its positioning close to the highway and the change in levels.
8. The grassed verge contributes positively to the open and attractive character of the area. The A639 connects the Pontefract town centre with the rural areas to the south and southeast of the district. It is considered that the open nature of the area contributes towards a gradual transition from a high-density urban setting to a lower-density rural setting.
9. With the exception of No.62 Maple Avenue, dwellings lining the A639 are typically set well back from the highway behind grassed verges. This allows for an open and spacious character which is evident for a long stretch of the highway from the junction of Hardwick Road and Maple Avenue to the north, leading to the railway bridge at the south which effectively forms the southern boundary of the urban area settlement.
10. The proposed development would represent the gradual loss of the grassed verge, and subsequently the open, green character of the surrounding area which positively contributes to the setting. The loss of this verge would therefore have a detrimental impact on the character of the area.
11. The matters of scale, appearance, landscaping and layout are not being considered but even so, a dwelling at this site would appear stark and incongruent within the street scene owing to its proximity to the A639 and the substantial change in levels between the appeal site and the highway to the east. Any dwelling in this location would loom over the highway in a manner which is not typical of the area.
12. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area. It would therefore be contrary to Policies SP23 and LP56 of the Development Strategy, Strategic and Local Policies, 2024 which together, amongst other matters, seek to ensure the delivery of high quality and sustainable development.

Other Matters

13. The appellant claims that the maintenance of the green strip of land is becoming difficult and if left unmaintained, it would have no benefit to the surrounding area. This is not a sufficient reason to justify harmful development nor alter my findings on the above main issue. I have also assessed this scheme based on present circumstances where the land in its current form positively contributes to the area.

Conclusion

14. The proposed development would conflict with the development plan when considered as a whole. There are no material considerations, either individually or in combination that would outweigh the identified harm and associated plan conflict. I conclude that the appeal is therefore dismissed.

N Teasdale

INSPECTOR