

NEWBURY 18/00876/FULD Pins Ref 3210045	6 Northwood Drive, Newbury Mr Hamey and Mrs Woodhead	New single family dwelling	Dele. Refusal	Dismissed 9.1.19
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Procedural matters

The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in July 2018. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment on its relevance to this appeal.

Main Issues

The main issues are the effect of the development on: the living conditions of the occupiers of No. 6 Northwood Drive, with particular regard to outdoor amenity space; and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Living conditions

The proposal would result in a significant reduction in No. 6's outdoor amenity space. Part 2 of the Council's Supplementary Planning Document 'Quality Design – West Berkshire' (2006) (SPD Quality Design) sets out a general guide for garden sizes from 100 square metres for 3 or more bedroom dwellings. It also emphasises the importance of the outdoor area's quality. Although focused on the living conditions of future occupiers in new developments, the Inspector had little evidence to indicate that the SPD's aim of ensuring adequate living conditions through the provision of sufficient outdoor amenity space is not also applicable to existing occupiers. He was satisfied that its guidance on garden sizes is therefore relevant to the proposal's effect on the living conditions of the occupiers in No. 6.

The Inspector recognised that future occupiers of No. 6 may prefer a small garden, and he noted that the existing garage would provide some storage space. However, the garden area remaining for No. 6 would provide very limited outdoor space, with room only for a small patio and few other features or play space. Although No. 6's existing garden area is generally larger than surrounding properties, its reduction to approximately 35 square metres would in most cases leave it significantly smaller than those of neighbouring properties and result in inadequate and poor quality external amenity space for the occupiers for the 3 bedroom dwelling of No. 6.

For the above reasons, the Inspector concluded that the proposal would not provide adequate living conditions of the occupiers of No. 6. He therefore found that the proposal does not accord with Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire Core Strategy (2006-2026) 2012 (West Berkshire CS) and the guidance contained within Part 2 of the SPD Quality Design. Amongst other aspects, these require developments to make a positive contribution to the quality of life in West Berkshire and provide suitable outdoor amenity space. It would also fail to accord with the provisions of the Framework in so far as it relates to ensuring a high standard of amenity for existing users.

The Council alleges that the proposal's harm to the living conditions of No. 6's occupiers would also be contrary to Policy ADPP1 of the West Berkshire CS. However, the Inspector found that the proposal does not conflict with this policy because ADPP1 sets out the Council's spatial strategy and approach to accommodating new development and does not cover existing occupiers' living conditions.

Character and appearance

The site currently forms part of No. 6's side garden, and provides an open character to the corner of Northwood Drive. The surrounding area generally consists of semi-detached and terraced properties.

While Nos. 2 - 4 and 6 Northwood Drive are set back from the road, the set back is not identical, there is a large gap between them, and boundary treatments differ. Consequently, the building line along the eastern end of Northwood Drive is not a significant attribute of the area. The proposal would therefore not harm the surrounding area simply because it would extend the building line further beyond that of Nos. 2 - 4.

While the proposal would reduce the open space in the corner of Northwood Drive, the new dwelling would be set back from the road and spacing to surrounding buildings would not be significantly affected. Combined with the trees opposite continuing to provide a natural and undeveloped environment in the

corner of Northwood Drive, the proposal would not have a significantly enclosing effect on the streetscene or unacceptably reduce the area's open character.

The proposed plot size of No. 6 would be generally smaller than surrounding plots. However, its size would not be particularly noticeable from the public realm, while the size of the appeal site would not appear significantly different to that of surrounding plots. The Inspector was therefore satisfied that the resulting plot sizes would not appear out of character or result in a cramped appearance.

There are variations between the surrounding semi-detached dwellings, such as the additional width arising from the attached garages and a first-floor side projection opposite the appeal site. There are also terraced properties on Northwood Drive, a short way and visible from the appeal site. The creation of a short terrace in this part of the road would therefore not be incongruous or out of character. The proposal's similar architectural design and proportions would also ensure a similar appearance to surrounding properties, while a condition could secure the use of suitable external materials.

For the above reasons, the Inspector concluded that the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. He therefore found that the proposal accords with Policies ADPP1 and Policy CS14 of the West Berkshire CS and the guidance contained within Part 2 of the SPD Quality Design and the Newbury Town Design Statement. Together, these require, amongst other aspects, high quality design that respects and enhances the area's architectural style and which relates to and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would also not conflict with the provisions of the Framework relating to character and appearance.

Other matters

The Inspector recognised the appellants undertook pre-application discussions with the Council, that the site is within the settlement boundary and that there is a presumption in favour of development that complies with the Development Plan. However, while he had found no harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, the significant harm that he had identified to the living conditions of the occupiers of No. 6 means that the proposal does not accord with the Development Plan and is sufficient for him to find against the proposal.

The Inspector noted third parties' concerns about overshadowing and overlooking, highway safety and parking, trees, structural stability, house prices and flooding. However, given that he was dismissing the appeal on the basis of the main issues that he had set out above, it was not necessary for him to consider these matters in greater detail.

Conclusion

For the reasons above, the appeal is dismissed.

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