



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 November 2010

by Malcolm Rivett BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 22 November 2010

Appeal Ref: APP/J0540/A/10/2134532

The Haven, Second Drift, Wothorpe, Stamford, Lincolnshire, PE9 3JH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr J Gibbison (Hereward Homes Ltd) against the decision of Peterborough City Council.
 - The application Ref 10/00688/FUL, dated 13 May 2010, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2010.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and erection of two dwellings (one with detached garage).
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Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

Main issue

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

Reasons

3. South-east of its attractive terrace of houses, the higher part of Second Drift is characterised by large, detached properties. Most of the older of these are set in large gardens whilst the more recently constructed dwellings (including those to the south-east of the appeal site and to the rear of The Redoubt) are generally of higher density. In contrast with a number of other houses in the vicinity, The Haven occupies less than half of the width of its plot and is separated from its neighbours (Cromwell House and Thomas House) by gaps which are wider than the dwelling itself. Despite the changes which have taken place in the area over the years and the recent, higher density development, these gaps and The Haven's ratio of building width to plot width give the area an attractive and spacious, semi-rural, character.
4. Although it would not project forward of the existing building line, the proposal's layout would substantially fill, with built development, the width of The Haven's plot, and the gaps between the proposed dwellings and their neighbours would be less than now, particularly in the case of Thomas House. The minimal space between the two new dwellings themselves, and the presence of the large detached garage to the front of the southern dwelling, would be much more akin to the nearby higher density housing than to the current spacious feel of the appeal site. Moreover, whilst I appreciate that the proposed dwellings are of a more traditional design than The Haven, and despite the presence of the new rear access road, I envisage that the

development would create the appearance of a continuous 'run' of houses on the east side of Second Drift of suburban, rather than semi-rural, character. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Of the policies referred to I consider policy DA2 of the adopted *Peterborough Local Plan (First Replacement)* to be most relevant to this proposal and I find that the scheme conflicts with its requirement that, having regard to its layout, development does not adversely affect the character of the area.

5. The Council also raises concern about the depth of the proposed dwellings' plots. However, whilst I recognise that these plots would be amongst the smallest in the area, their lack of depth, although seen from some neighbouring dwellings, would not be readily apparent from the public realm and as such would be unlikely to cause any significant harm to the area's character or appearance. Similarly, I am not persuaded that any harm would be likely to result from the dwellings being 'cut' into the slope of the site. I appreciate that permission has been granted for a single dwelling on the site in a similar position to that of the southern house now proposed. However, although close to Thomas House there would be a very wide gap between this dwelling and Cromwell House and, thus, I do not consider this scheme to be comparable with the proposal before me. I understand that the Council has indicated that two houses on the appeal site could be acceptable. That may or may not be so although, in the absence of an approved scheme along such lines against which I could compare the proposal before me, this has not carried any significant weight in my decision.
6. In addition to its other concerns about the development the Council indicates that contributions towards improvements to local infrastructure/services are necessary to make the proposal acceptable. This is not challenged by the appellant and he has submitted a completed s106 undertaking which would provide for such contributions in connection with the implementation of the appeal scheme. Reference is made to the Council's *Planning Obligations Implementation Scheme Supplementary Planning Document*. However, as I have not been provided with a copy of this document, I am unable to ascertain whether or not the undertaking complies with the tests set out in *Circular 05/2005 - Planning Obligations* and the requirements of the *Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010, S1 2010 No 948*. Nonetheless, even if the undertaking accords with these regulations and tests, it does not justify the proposal given the harm I have found the scheme would cause.
7. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matter raised, including the cited sustainability of the site and the views of neighbouring residents, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Malcolm Rivett

INSPECTOR