



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 11 August 2020

by S Thomas BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/R3325/W/20/3253000

Meadows, Suggs Lane, Broadway, Ilminster TA19 9RJ

- 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 Mrs J Hodges against the decision of South Somerset District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00383/FUL, dated 22 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 3 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is erection of dwelling and garage and adjustment of access drive (amended scheme).
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. During the course of the appeal, the Council submitted information¹ relating to their updated 5-year Housing Land Supply (HLS) position. The Council indicate they can now demonstrate a HLS figure in excess of the 5-year requirement of approximately 6 years. The main parties have had the opportunity to comment on this matter and this has informed my decision on this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site contains a distinctive stone fronted dwelling (the Meadows) and a detached garage set within a spacious garden area. Whilst there is a mix of dwelling types and plot sizes in the vicinity, the Meadows and its large open garden area is a feature of interest along Suggs Lane. Although there is a large detached dwelling to the east, and new build dwellings to the north, the appeal site provides a characterful open aspect to this edge of settlement location.
5. The proposed dwelling would be substantially larger than the Meadows and located at an angle to it further forward in the garden. It would also be higher than the Meadows. Together with the close proximity to the Meadows and the northern boundary of the site, the proposed dwelling would appear overly dominant and hemmed in within the plot disrupting the spacious open character. This would be accentuated by the proposed detached garage which given its separation from the proposed dwelling, would appear fragmented and would intrude into this open character further. Although the proposal would use

¹ South Somerset District Council Five Year Housing Land Supply Paper (November 2020)

materials that are reflective of the area, this would not mitigate the harm caused. The proposed development would appear intrusive and would fail to integrate successfully into the area.

6. I have had regard to the suggested inclusion of a condition for additional planting along Suggs Lane, however this would not effectively mitigate the impact of the proposal. In any event, additional screening would only serve to reduce views into this site at detriment to its spacious open character. Even if the appellant could erect buildings within the garden under Permitted Development rights, this is not relevant to my determination of this appeal. In any event, this would not have the same impact as the proposal before me.
7. I note that Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that decisions should not prevent or discourage appropriate innovation or change. However, it is clear that development should be sympathetic to local character including the surrounding built environment and landscape setting. In this case, I find the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area and would not be a sympathetic addition to it.
8. For the reasons above, the proposal would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, it would be in conflict with Policy EQ2 of the South Somerset Local Plan (2015) (Local Plan). Amongst other matters this policy seeks to ensure that development will be designed to achieve a high quality, which promotes South Somerset's local distinctiveness and preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the district. In addition, the proposal would conflict with Paragraph 127 of the Framework for the reasons above.

Other Matters

9. The Council state that they can now demonstrate a 5-year HLS. Accordingly, they now consider Policy SS2 of the Local Plan can be afforded significant weight in the determination of the appeal. However, given the unacceptability of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, I do not consider it necessary to consider this matter further.
10. Whilst the proposal would provide an additional dwelling, any economic and social benefits that might be associated with it would be very modest and would not outweigh the harm I have found to the area's character and appearance. Given this harm, the proposal would not comply with the policies of the development plan when taken as a whole.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, the appeal does not succeed.

S Thomas

INSPECTOR