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## Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Ymweliad safle a wnaed ar 12/5/20

gan Hywel Wyn Jones BA(Hons) BTP  
MRTPI

Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru

Dyddiad: 01.06.2020

## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12/5/20

by Hywel Wyn Jones BA(Hons) BTP  
MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers

Date: 01.06.2020

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**Appeal Ref: APP/H6955/A/20/3244185**

**Site address: 32 Sandringham Road, Wrexham, LL11 2RE**

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| <b>The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.</b> |
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- 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 Luke Roberts and Miss Lauren Gallagher against the decision of Wrexham County Borough Council.
  - The application (ref: P/2019/0735), dated 2 September 2019, was refused by notice dated 31 October 2019.
  - The development proposed is the erection of a proposed bungalow with proposed independent pedestrian and vehicular access.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, and on the living condition of neighbouring residents, particularly in terms of any noise, disturbance and loss of privacy.

### Reasons

#### *Character and Appearance*

3. Sandringham Road is located within a residential estate. Most of the street is flanked by rows of two-storey, semi-detached houses which are set back a similar distance from the highway with broadly consistent gaps between the buildings. At one end of the street the otherwise straight road has a pronounced bend which demarcates a change in house style which begins with No. 32, a detached dwelling of similar style to those already described and is followed by a row of semi-detached bungalows. On the opposite side of this section of the street there are detached dwellings with much of the first-floor accommodation within the roofspace.
  4. Despite the differences in the height, style and materials of dwellings within the street they mostly maintain a uniform set back from the highway and similar spacings. The consistency of their arrangement, together with the similarities in the appearance of
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the dwellings, particularly in terms of style and external materials, create a strong sense of visual cohesiveness and a pleasant residential environment.

5. The proposed bungalow would be sited within much of the present back garden of No. 32 which is markedly larger than most nearby back gardens. A driveway access would be created between it and No. 34, within an existing gap which is wider than the general spacing in the street. The bungalow is of a simple design, lacking features or projections that characterise the street scene. Whilst it would be generally masked from street views by the existing dwellings that surround it, it would be readily visible in between Nos 32 and 34, along the proposed accessway. From this vantage point the backland position of the dwelling would appear incongruous in relation to the street pattern and cramped in terms of its proximity to No. 32. As the Council points out, Technical Advice Note 12: Design advises that every effort should be made to orientate dwellings to front existing roads.
6. I note the intention to provide screening that would mask the lower portion of the dwelling but such a measure would serve to emphasise the incongruous appearance of the development when compared to nearby dwellings that front the highway. The creation of the driveway would result in the loss of attractive hedgerow and would introduce an incongruous feature that would serve to draw attention to the proposed development at the rear of the property. The creation of screens either side of the drive, that would be needed to minimise the impact on the living conditions of neighbouring residents, would emphasise the discordant presence of the driveway.
7. The Council draws my attention to similarities between the scheme and a proposal dismissed on appeal in 2019<sup>1</sup> in terms of visual effect on their surroundings. I agree that there is a degree commonality but have determined this appeal on its particular merits.
8. On this main issue I find that the scheme would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and as such is in conflict with criterion a) of policy GDP1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan which requires new development to make a positive contribution to the appearance of the locality.

#### *Living Conditions*

9. Cars associated with the proposed dwelling would pass the side elevations of the existing dwellings. On both sides the gap would be at least the width of a driveway and there is scope to provide screening measures that would limit noise disturbance and headlight glare to the neighbouring side windows. However, the comings and goings normally associated with a dwelling would introduce disturbance such as engine noise from cars manoeuvring within the site and the banging of doors within an area that would be adjacent to the rear gardens of Nos 32 and 34 Sandringham Road as well as 2 dwellings on Sterling Avenue.
10. It is clear from their representations that the Sterling Avenue neighbours value the tranquillity of their rear garden. Although the other 2 dwellings most affected are presently owned by the appellant the peaceful nature of the rear gardens is a quality that future residents would reasonably expect to enjoy within this residential estate.
11. The scheme would retain a reasonably sized rear garden to serve No. 32. Whilst I have no reason to dispute the appellant's assertion that the size of the outdoor amenity area that would serve the proposed dwelling would meet Council design guide

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<sup>1</sup> APP/H6955/A/19/3227191

standards, it would be mostly in the form of narrow strips around the site's perimeter. It would not provide the spacious usable open space generally provided by the back gardens of the nearby properties.

12. Whilst the concerns raised by neighbours over potential loss of privacy could be addressed by a planning condition to require the provision of adequate screening measures, the harmful disturbance that I have identified is not a matter that can be acceptably mitigated. Thus, I find that the scheme would be harmful to the living conditions of neighbouring residents contrary to criterion f) of policy GDP1 which seeks to ensure the amenity of the public.

### **Conclusion**

13. Have taken into account that access and services can be provided to the development, that the dwelling would contribute to the supply of housing in a popular and sustainable location, and that it is designed to be energy efficient.
14. I have noted the appellant's reference to a planning appeal allowed to the rear of 10 Acton Gate. No details of this case have been provided but from my visit it was evident that the arrangement of properties surrounding that site differs significantly from the present case.
15. Having considered all matters raised in support of the scheme I find that it would be unacceptable as a result of the harm I identify in relation to both main issues. Thus, I shall dismiss the appeal.
16. In reaching my decision, I have taken into account the requirements of sections 3 and 5 of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. I consider that this decision is in accordance with the Act's sustainable development principle through its contribution towards the Welsh Ministers' well-being objective of supporting safe, cohesive and resilient communities.

*Hywel Wyn Jones*

INSPECTOR