



Penderfyniad ar yr Apêl

Appeal Decision

Ymweliad â safle a wnaed ar 16/01/13

Site visit made on 16/01/13

gan Gareth A. Rennie BSc(Hons) DipTP
Arolygydd a benodir gan Weinidogion Cymru
Dyddiad: 08/03/13

by Gareth A. Rennie BSc(Hons) DipTP
an Inspector appointed by the Welsh Ministers
Date: 08/03/13

Appeal Ref: APP/H6955/A/12/2187559

**Site address: land adjoining Gresford TV and Video Services, High Street,
Gresford, Wrexham, LL12 8PS**

The Welsh Ministers have transferred the authority to decide this appeal to me as the appointed Inspector.

- 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 Paul Evans against the decision of Wrexham County Borough Council.
 - The application Ref GRE P/2012/0645, dated 25 June 2012, was refused by notice dated 5 November 2012.
 - The development proposed is a small 2 bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this case are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of its residents and of neighbouring residents, and the effect of the proposal on highway safety.

Reasons

3. The appeal site forms part of the rear yard of a commercial premises which faces the High Street. The surrounding area is a mainly residential one with the majority of houses detached and in reasonably sized gardens. There is also a reasonably strong building line which gives the area a sense of consistency despite the variation in building sizes and styles. Overall there is a rhythm and regularity that typifies the character of the area. The character of the area is dependent to a large part on the balance between the built environment and open space which gives a sense of spaciousness.
4. The proposal would introduce a sizeable building into the rear yard. This would result in a form of development that would be at odds with this relationship and would create a prominent building in an incongruous position. The development would also appear contrived and more related to the availability of land rather than any considered approach to the characteristics of the area. The separation between the proposed dwelling and the commercial premises would be very narrow and the dwelling would appear cramped and incongruous in an area where more obviously detached houses within larger plots are the norm.

5. The proposed dwelling would also lie close to the rear of the commercial premises and bungalows off Parsonage Close to the rear. In addition the proposed house would have a small amenity area and would be confined by high boundaries. This would result in a poor outlook generally, a sense of confinement, and a reduced level of natural light. I do not consider changes to the boundary treatment or window and door openings would compensate for this.
6. Moreover, this two bedroom unit appears to be intended for family occupation and as such would provide wholly inadequate garden area in terms of play space, security and privacy. Whilst there are playing fields nearby I do not consider these to be adequate compensation for the lack of usable private open space.
7. The proximity of the bungalows to the rear would give the impression of overlooking and in turn would be overlooked from windows in the proposed dwelling. This overlooking would not result in sufficient loss of privacy to refuse in its own right but it does add additional weight to my previous conclusions.
8. For these reasons I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and have a seriously harmful impact on the living conditions of its residents. It is therefore contrary to policies PS2 and GDP1 of the Wrexham Unitary Development Plan (UDP) which seek to ensure that development makes a positive contribution to the appearance of the nearby locality and must not detrimentally affect townscape character. It is also contrary to guidance within the Council's Local Planning Guidance Note 21 – *Space around Dwellings* which seeks to maintain minimum separation distances between houses and seeks to maintain adequate garden space within new developments.
9. The appeal site is previous developed land (PDL) and there is access to public transport within easy walking distance. From this point of view it would seem a sustainable location for residential development and to accord, at least in part, with national planning advice contained within Planning Policy Wales (PPW). This advice seeks to promote sustainable residential environments and the efficient use of land. Nonetheless, the use of PDL in this case does not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
10. The Council have also stated that they consider that there is inadequate off-street parking associated with the proposal and an inadequate turning area such that vehicles entering and leaving the property would not be able to do so in forward gear.
11. There are no parking restrictions along the High Street and despite the Council's assertions that it is subject to congestion, I saw no example of this during my site visit. My site visit was for a short time only but I saw no reason that the situation I experienced was not typical. Moreover, the appeal site is situated within walking distance of a range of services, and facilities, and public transport opportunities that the area offers, and residents without cars may be attracted to the proposed dwelling because of this level of accessibility.
12. Given this, I consider that there is adequate parking despite it being below the suggested parking standards contained within the Council's Local Planning Guidance Note 16 – *Parking Standards*. In addition, whilst the layout of the turning area does not fully accord with standards I consider it adequate in the circumstances. I conclude, overall, that the proposal would not result in a significant risk to road safety. This does not, however, undermine my previous conclusions.

13. The appellant has brought a number of other similar developments to my attention. Nevertheless these differ in siting and circumstances to this case which I have determined on its own merits. It is also suggested by the appellant that the dwelling would be affordable. However, there is insufficient evidence in this case that this would be appropriate to the needs of the community or how its affordability would be secured. I do not consider that the provision of affordable housing on this basis is sufficient to outweigh the harm to the character and appearance or living conditions that I have identified.
14. Consequently for the reasons given above, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Gareth A. Rennie

Inspector