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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 April 2018

**by Jillian Rann BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 04 May 2018**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/F4410/W/18/3193478**

**23 (Land to the rear of) Oak Crescent, Thorne, Doncaster, S. Yorks  
DN8 4HJ**

- 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 Laurance Cunningham against the decision of Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 17/01420/FUL, dated 22 May 2017, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2017.
  - The development proposed is pair of semi-detached houses.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matter

2. The Council refers to an inaccuracy with regard to the scale of the block plan on submitted drawing JBA.3553.102 . I note this, but also that the proposed site layout is accurately shown elsewhere on the submitted plans, and I consider the proposal on the basis of those correct details. I note that the address on the same drawing also refers to a different site, however it is clear from my visit that the details on the drawing refer to the site of the appeal before me.

### Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on: (i) the character and appearance of the appeal site and its surroundings, with particular regard to the siting, height and design of the proposed dwellings; and (ii) the free and safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians within the site and its vicinity.

### Reasons

#### *Character and appearance*

4. The site is a small, vacant area of land to the rear of houses on Oak Crescent and Oak Road. Oak Crescent forms a loop around an area of open space, with houses on all sides looking onto this central area. The houses on Oak Crescent are two-storey terraced and semi-detached properties of a relatively uniform flat-roofed design, finished in buff brick with tile hanging to their front elevations. All have individual vehicular access points directly from Oak

Crescent, with drives and garages to the front. Houses around the corner on the section of Oak Road adjacent to the site are of the same design as those on Oak Crescent. However, the wider area has a more varied character, and houses on Corona Drive, to the rear of Oak Crescent and beyond the appeal site, are finished in red brick and render, with hipped or gable-ended roofs.

5. The Doncaster Council Residential Backland and Infill Development: Supplementary Planning Document (the Backland and Infill SPD) advises that, by its nature, backland development such as the current proposal should be largely out of view and not dominate the frontage property, but still be partly visible so that people can find it. It thus advises that backland development should be subservient (i.e. smaller in size, massing and scale) to the frontage property.
6. The proposed semi-detached houses would be two-storey with a hipped roof. As a necessary flood protection measure arising as a result of the site's location in a Flood Zone, their internal floor level would be elevated above the adjacent external ground levels to some degree. The proposed houses would therefore be significantly higher than the existing properties on Oak Crescent in close proximity, and their roofs would be clearly evident from public viewpoints around Oak Crescent and along the section of Oak Road closest to the site.
7. The roofscape of this side of Oak Crescent is characterised by its relatively low, flat-roofed houses in the foreground, with the tops of the hipped roofs of the houses on Corona Drive only just visible from some public vantage points. The proposed houses would be closer to the rear of houses on Oak Crescent than the existing properties on Corona Drive are at present. As a result of this, and their greater height compared to the existing properties on Oak Crescent, their roofs would have a significantly greater prominence in the street scene and the roofscape of Oak Crescent and Oak Road, both at close range and in more distant views.
8. The proposal would therefore result in an incongruous form of development which would dominate the existing frontage development along Oak Crescent and Oak Road to an unacceptable degree, and which would appear as an unduly prominent and discordant feature in this otherwise relatively regular and uninterrupted roofscape. I therefore consider that the proposed development would be of significant detriment to the character and appearance of the site and its wider surroundings as a result of its height and siting.
9. Whilst the proposed houses would differ from properties on Oak Crescent in their architectural detailing, roof design and materials, these characteristics of their design would nonetheless be reflective of housing within the site's wider context and I consider their design to be acceptable in this respect. However, for the reasons above I consider that, due to their height and siting, the proposed houses would appear unduly prominent and fail to integrate effectively with the distinctiveness of their immediate surroundings.
10. I note that permission has recently been granted for residential development on an area of open space on Corona Drive, part of which adjoins the site. I have been referred to comparisons between the appeal proposal and this recently-approved development. However, whilst I have been provided with a limited amount of information regarding this neighbouring scheme, I do not have full details of the proposals and the particular circumstances in which permission was granted. Furthermore, at the time of my visit, works did not

appear to have commenced on this approved development. Consequently, I can attach little weight to this permission. I have considered the appeal on its own planning merits and on the basis of the information before me, and find the proposal unacceptable for the reasons above.

11. For the reasons above, I consider that the development would be of significant detriment to the character and appearance of the appeal site and its surroundings with regard to its height and siting. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policy CS14 of the Doncaster Council Core Strategy 2011-2028, adopted May 2012 (the Core Strategy), and with the aims of the Backland and Infill SPD. Amongst other things these require that development contributes to local distinctiveness and integrates well with its immediate and surrounding area.

#### *Highway safety*

12. The proposed development would be served from the site's existing access from Oak Crescent. As confirmed by the Council and the appellant, at some points the proposed access drive would be narrower than the 3.1m minimum access width for a shared private drive referred to in the South Yorkshire Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2011 (the SYRDG).
13. The proposed access drive would be relatively straight for much of its length, before curving around the back of 23 Oak Crescent as it enters the site. Whilst the side wall of No 23 and the boundary treatment to the rear of this property would obscure visibility to some degree, the curve in the access drive around the rear of this property would be relatively gradual, and I do not consider that these existing structures would represent a significant obstruction to visibility at this point. Furthermore, due to the open plan, unenclosed nature of the front gardens of houses on Oak Crescent to either side of the access drive, visibility is good at the site entrance. As such, I consider that visibility along the length of the drive for vehicles and pedestrians using it would be satisfactory overall.
14. As the drive would serve only 2 properties, the number of vehicle movements along it, and the likelihood of vehicles and pedestrians seeking to pass along its length would be very low. I also consider that the limited length and width of the drive would serve to restrict vehicle speeds along it to a significant degree. As a result, and due to the extent of visibility along the drive, I do not consider that the shortfall in the width of the drive at particular points would present a significant hazard to the safety of those using the drive.
15. Whilst the access drive would not be wide enough to allow the two-way passing of vehicles on it, in view of the relatively small scale of the development I consider that the presence of passing vehicles would occur relatively infrequently. Oak Crescent is a quiet side road which serves a limited number of properties, and visibility from the site along Oak Crescent is good as described above. Therefore even in the event that a vehicle had to wait on the Oak Crescent carriageway for a short period for another vehicle to leave the appeal site, from the specific evidence before me, I do not consider that this would create an undue obstruction or have significant implications for the safety of vehicles and pedestrians on Oak Crescent, or for the operation of the wider highway network.

16. I note that the dimensions of the parking spaces proposed within the site are below the minimum dimensions set out in the SYRDG. On the basis of the information before me it appears that there would be possible scope within the site to enlarge the spaces, and the appellant has suggested a condition to cover this matter. However, as I have found the development to be unacceptable for other reasons, I have not considered this matter further in this instance.
17. I note the references relating to access to the site for fire vehicles. However, the evidence before me is not clear in relation to any perceived shortcomings in this respect and as I have found the development to be unacceptable for other reasons, I do not consider this matter further.
18. For the reasons above I do not consider that the development would be of significant detriment to the free and safe movement of vehicles and pedestrians within the site and its vicinity. As such the proposal does not conflict with Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy, which amongst other things requires that development makes a positive contribution to the safety of the highway. Nor does the proposal conflict with the aims of the SYRDG as a whole, whose technical requirements are, amongst other things, designed to provide appropriate layouts which achieve high levels of vehicle and pedestrian safety.

#### **Other matters**

19. Matters relating to private access rights across the site, as referred to by a neighbouring resident, would be a civil matter between the parties involved, and do not affect my findings on the main issues in this case.

#### **Conclusion**

20. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

*Jillian Rann*

INSPECTOR