
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 September 2016

by S. J. Buckingham, BA (Hons) DipTP MSc MRTPI FSA

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

Decision date: 27th September, 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/E3525/W/16/3149830

Fairholme, The Street, Hepworth, Suffolk, IP22 2PR

- 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 Amos Webb against the decision of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/15/1977/FUL, dated 24 September 2015, was refused by notice dated 18 November 2015.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 1 no. replacement bungalow and erection of 1 no. new bungalow together with new garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Fairholme is an averagely sized bungalow set in a large corner site adjoining a rural crossroads created by the meeting of North Common and The Street. On two sides it faces open countryside set behind high naturalised hedges. The site itself is bounded by a substantial beech hedge.
 4. Adjacent housing in North Common has a semi-rural feel and along its developed side comprises bungalows and modest houses, well-spaced within relatively generous plots. They are generally set back from the lane with open frontages bounded by hedges and mature trees. The townscape in The Street is more suburban as it runs towards a more closely developed area of housing set along both sides of the road.
 5. The principle of development for housing on this site is not at issue as it is within the defined settlement boundary. The appeal proposal would create two bungalows on the site, orientated away from North Common to face an access running into the site from the frontage. The flank of one bungalow would adjoin the North Common frontage, and would be much closer to it than the average setback of other dwellings along the road. The pair of dwellings would each be noticeably larger than the existing, and would take up a greater proportion of the site. They would as a result be closely spaced with each other and with the site boundaries to back and front.
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6. The combined effect of these factors would be, therefore, to create a more intensive development of the appeal site, giving it a more urbanised appearance than at present. The buildings themselves would appear cramped within their immediate setting. This appearance would be at variance from the semi-rural and more open settings of existing dwellings along North Common, to which the current dwelling most closely relates. It would therefore have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area.
7. A previous permission for an additional dwelling at the site was brought to my attention, but this has now expired. I also note that an identical scheme to the appeal scheme has been refused in the recent past. In any case, however, I have determined the appeal case on its own merits.
8. I conclude that the appeal proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, and would therefore conflict with Policy DM2 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015 (DMPD) which requires that proposals for development maintain local character, and would conflict with Policy DM22 of the DMPD, which seeks that residential development proposals should maintain or create a sense of place and/or character. It would also conflict with Policy CS2 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 (CS), which seeks to achieve sustainable development, including development which makes a positive contribution to local distinctiveness, and Policy CS3 of the CS which requires that proposals for development will be based on an understanding of local context.
9. While the appeal proposal is in a location which is capable of being considered a sustainable one, the Framework requires that sustainable development should protect the character and appearance of the area in which it is located, and should protect the character of the countryside. Since, for the reasons given above, the proposed bungalows do not achieve this, they therefore conflict with the Framework in this respect.

Other Matters

10. The concern of the occupier of the neighbour dwelling about the potential for blockage to the ditch between the properties and subsequent flooding relates to the development of the appeal site were planning permission to be granted.
11. The appellant has requested that I give guidance on what would be an acceptable form of development on this site, but my role is solely to determine the appeal application.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, therefore, and taking into account matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S J Buckingham

INSPECTOR