The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 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: 20th October, 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/J3530/W/16/3151160
Eureka, Cliff Road, Waldringfield, Suffolk, IP12 4QL

- 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 K Moodie against the decision of Suffolk Coastal District Council.
- The application Ref DC/16/0510/FUL, dated 30 January, 2016, was refused by notice dated 31 March, 2016.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling; erection of three dwellings and garage; alterations to existing access.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for demolition of existing dwelling; erection of three dwellings and garage; alterations to existing access at Eureka, Cliff Road, Waldringfield, Suffolk, IP12 4QL in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref DC/16/0510/FUL, dated 30 January 2016, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the conditions set out in the schedule to this decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Eureka is a large bungalow with a wide frontage and large back garden, set back from Cliff Road at the end of an access drive. It sits on an irregularly shaped plot which has a side extension containing a large shed and a garden room. It is a building of no particular architectural merit, and its potential demolition is not at issue.

4. The site is towards the edge of Waldringfield, and within the Suffolk Coast and Heaths Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). It is separated from Cliff Road by School Cottage and its large garden, and flanked to one side by the primary school, and to the other by the houses and gardens set along Mill Road. It has largely well-established boundary treatment including substantial hedges and boundary fences. The site and bungalow are therefore unobtrusive, and bar a glimpse along the access drive, are not easily visible from the public realm. The rear boundary of the site has a low chain link fence, and adjoins a playing field belonging to the primary school, which is bounded on its far side by a substantial hedge and mature trees.

5. There is no dispute that the appeal site is within the physical limits of the village of Waldringfield, which is designated as a Local Service Centre, capable of accommodating new residential development in the form of infill or small groups. Policy SP27 of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan 2013 (LP) seeks to manage the allocation of sites for housing development, but does not preclude the possibility of windfall sites coming forward. The principle of development of this as a windfall site is therefore not at issue.

6. The appeal development would entail the replacement of the bungalow with three two-storey houses set in a closely spaced group, separated by pedestrian access on both sides of each, with garden spaces to the rear and landscaping and parking areas to the front. The Council has confirmed that the curtilage spaces associated with each house are of a reasonable size. The proposed houses would sit close to the flanking boundaries of the site, but in doing so would adjoin the garden spaces of houses along Mill land and a landscaped area to the rear of the primary school rather than other buildings, and would only be relatively close to the primary school where it faces the appeal site across the access drive. The existing shed would be converted to accommodate parking, and the side extension to the site behind it would remain as amenity space.

7. This part of Waldringfield is mixed in character, and includes both two storey houses and bungalows set in plots of differing sizes ranging from the very generous to the adequate. The village as a whole is not without groups of very closely spaced or terraced houses. While properties directly adjoining the appeal site are characterised by large garden spaces, close by, at Church Meadows is a recently constructed group of substantial, two storey and closely spaced houses with garages and parking spaces to the fore.

8. I conclude therefore that in the context of an area of mixed character of this kind, the proposed dwellings would be set within adequate space on the site itself, and would not be close enough to adjoining properties to create a sense of enclosure or to diminish the overall sense of openness in the immediate area. They would not therefore appear as overdevelopment of the site, or particularly cramped, and would not therefore be harmful to that character.

9. The site is not in a conspicuous location within the village, being set back from and largely concealed from view from Cliff Road and Mill Land, and shielded from view on one flank by the primary school. Although higher than fronting buildings, by virtue of this set back only the upper storeys or roofs of the proposed houses would be glimpsed from outside the site. The appeal development is not therefore likely to have a significant impact on the townscape of the area. Although the rear of the proposed dwellings would be visible over the boundary fence to the school playing field, this is proposed to be raised in height, while the substantial hedgerow on the far side of the playing field would screen views of the site from the open country beyond. I do not consider therefore that it would have a significant impact on the AONB.

10. I consider therefore that as the appeal proposal would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area it would not conflict with Policy SP15 of the LP which seeks to protect and enhance the character of the AONB, Policy DM7 of the LP which seeks to ensure that the subdivision of plots to form additional dwellings will not result in cramped development which is out of character with the area, or Policy DM21 which seeks that development

proposals should relate well to the scale and character of their surroundings. As it would not have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, the appeal development would not conflict with the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the Framework.

Other Matters

11. The submitted plans indicate an access drive of sufficient width to accommodate passing vehicles, albeit narrowing where it passes the protected oak tree and a visibility splay of 25 metres on either side. Cliff Road is a narrow road, but subject to a 20 M.P.H. speed limit. I note the concern that there are high volumes of traffic outside the primary school at points in the morning and afternoon. However, although the development of the site would generate a greater number of car journeys, I consider that the redesign of the access here it enters Cliff Road would be an improvement on the current situation, where there is no footway, and the exit is directly onto the road between a hedge and the oak tree. The presence of the footpath would serve to slow down drivers using the access drive. I do not, therefore, consider that the appeal development would have a harmful impact on highway safety.

12. Noise and disturbance and extra parking caused by construction would be for a temporary period only. A collection point for bins has been identified on the access drive close to Cliff Road. No evidence has been put before me to demonstrate a realistic prospect of flooding from surface water runoff as a result of the development.

13. The proposed dwellings would be set sufficiently far from adjoining houses not to have a significant effect on the living condition of occupiers of those houses in respect of light reaching them or overlooking. Although the creation of additional housing on site would generate additional vehicle movements, these would be commensurate with their use as private dwellings, and at a sufficient distance from adjoining dwellings not to have a harmful effect on the living conditions of their occupiers in terms of noise and disturbance.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, and taking into account matters raised, I consider therefore that the appeal should be allowed.

Conditions

15. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council and the requirements of the Framework. For the clarity a condition is added requiring that development is carried out in accordance with the approved plans. A condition requiring approved details of external facing materials to be followed is added in the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the area. A condition requiring the submission and approval of details of internal and external boundary treatments is also required in the interests of protecting the character and appearance of the area. A condition is added requiring that details of the highways and driveway improvements are implemented prior to occupation of the site in the interests of highways safety.

S J Buckingham

INSPECTOR

SCHEDULE

1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 3409/10/E, 3409/11/A, 3409/12, 3409/13, 3409/14, 3409/15, 3409/16, 3409/17/A, 3409/18 and 3409/19.

3) Materials to be used on the external surfaces of the dwellings shall be as specified in the approved plans, or as otherwise submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority.

4) The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until internal and external boundary treatments have been put in place according to a scheme that has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority

5) The dwellings hereby permitted shall not be occupied until the improvements to the highway and driveway shall have been constructed in accordance with details shown on drawing 3409/18.