

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 December 2016

by Chris Forrett BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/W/16/3157075

7 Autumn Close, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 2JG

- 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 Wayne Turner against the decision of Breckland District Council.
 - The application Ref 3PL/2016/0816/F, dated 4 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of detached single storey dwellinghouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site is the north-western part of the existing curtilage of 7 Autumn Close and is adjacent to Norwich Road and the traffic island with Mundford Road. The site is set at a lower land level than Norwich Road and is bounded by a timber fence to the side and rear and a laurel hedgerow. The other properties on Autumn Close are set in large plots and exhibit a sense of spaciousness.
 4. The appeal development would be sited forward of a building line fronting Norwich Road which is currently formed of the existing side of No 7 and the frontages to other residential properties to the south-west towards the Deers Leep Public House. The set back of the building along this frontage, combined with the open nature of the highway and grass verge, present an attractive open area despite the presence of the boundary fence around the appeal site.
 5. The proposal would introduce a built form which would not respect the pattern of development fronting Norwich Road and would result in a loss of openness at this prominent corner site. Whilst the lower land levels at the site, together with the single storey nature of the proposal, would minimise its impact it would nevertheless have a significant effect on the open character of the area.
 6. Furthermore, the size of the plot is significantly smaller than others along Autumn Close. Whilst I acknowledge that the plot is of a size which could accommodate sufficient private amenity space and parking provision for the
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size of the dwelling, it would appear cramped when compared to the existing properties in Autumn Close. Consequently, it would not respect the overall character of the area.

7. In coming to this conclusion I acknowledge that the design of the dwelling would reflect some of the features of No 7 and would not, in isolation, stand out as being of a poor design. It would also respect the design and materials of other properties in Autumn Close. However, this does not outweigh the harm I have identified to the overall character and appearance of the area.
8. For the above reasons, I conclude that the dwelling would lead to unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the area contrary the provisions of Policies DC1 and DC16 of the Breckland Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document 2001-2026 (2009) which amongst other things seek to protect the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would also be at odds with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to secure good design.

Other matters

9. I have also had regard to the comments made regarding the highway implications of the development and the existing trees. However I note the comments of the Highway Authority who raise no objection to the development which cannot be mitigated by planning conditions. I have no reason to disagree with that view.
10. In respect of the trees on and adjoining the site, I note that the impact on any trees did not form part of the Council's reason for refusal. From my site visit, I did not note any trees which would be affected by the development.
11. I also acknowledge the concerns over the desk-based approach to the pre-application discussions and in relation to trees. However, these matters have very little bearing on the planning merits of the case.

Planning balance

12. The appellant has stated that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year housing land supply of developable land and that the presumption of sustainable development outlined at paragraph 14 of the Framework should apply. It is noted that there is no dispute that the development would be in a sustainable location.
13. However, from the limited evidence before me, it is unclear whether the Council does have a five year housing land supply. Notwithstanding that, even if this was the case, the Framework indicates that permission should not be granted if the adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole.
14. I have found that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the Framework and the CS. This factor weighs heavily against allowing the proposed development.
15. The development would give rise to some minor social benefits in that it would provide much need additional housing. The development would also bring

some minor economic benefits through the construction process. These matters are in favour of the proposed development.

16. The provision of one dwelling would be unlikely to have any significant effect in reducing any deficit should there be one. Against this background, the harm identified significantly and demonstrably outweighs the minor benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusions

17. Taking all matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Chris Forrett

INSPECTOR