
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2016

by Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge BA (Hons) MTP MRTPI IHBC

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

Decision date: 18th January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E3525/W/16/3158651

1 Elmhurst Close, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 8EG

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr J Chamberlain against the decision of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/0980/OUT, dated 9 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is new dwelling on land within the curtilage of 1 Elmhurst Close.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The planning application was made in outline with all matters reserved. I have had regard to all of the plans submitted with the appeal, but have treated the siting, scale and layout of development and the access and parking arrangements, as shown on the plans, as indicative only.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of Hamlet Road Conservation Area and the setting of listed buildings.

Reasons

4. Hamlet Road Conservation Area forms a historic approach into Haverhill town centre. The appeal site lies within the section of conservation area from Ehringshausen Way to the United Reform Church which is characterised by historic and listed buildings within the conservation area that are located close to the pavement, and modern properties beyond the conservation area that are typically set further back. This differentiation contributes greatly to the significance of the conservation area and listed buildings, emphasising the historic form of development along the approach to the town centre.
 5. The appeal site is located just outside the conservation area and comprises open and undeveloped garden space to the side of 1 Elmhurst Close. It contributes to the significance of the conservation area and the listed buildings by providing the setback space for the modern development of Elmhurst Close, helped by vegetation along the boundary of the site adjacent to Hamlet Road
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and between the appeal site and 19 Hamlet Road. It also allows for short and long distance views of the Grade II listed 19 Hamlet Road approaching the building from the south, and views of the Grade II* listed Anne of Cleves House from Elmhurst Close near to the junction with Hamlet Road. These views form part of the setting of the listed buildings and the surroundings in which they are experienced, and thus contribute to their significance.

6. As an outline application with all matters reserved, it is not possible to know the exact details of the proposed building, including whether it would be detached or attached to the existing property at 1 Elmhurst Close. However, the provision of a new dwelling would involve a building that would not be insignificant in scale and footprint, even as a single storey property and taking into account the small drop in levels from Hamlet Road.
7. It would bring modern development closer to Hamlet Road, towards the listed Anne of Cleves House on the opposite side of the road. Effects on direct views to Anne of Cleves House would be limited to Elmhurst Close, but the encroachment into the space between modern and historic buildings would be harmful to its significance and the significance of the conservation area. Views towards the listed 19 Hamlet Road would be obscured for a considerably greater distance along Hamlet Road, which would harm its significance. The retention or reinforcement of hedging and landscaping would not be enough to entirely hide the property or mitigate its negative effects.
8. The proposed alterations to boundary treatments and the provision of access and parking to the dwelling are also unknown at this stage. The site plan and block plan show different possible parking arrangements to the rear of the dwelling, which in either case would necessitate the loss of some vegetation to provide such space. This would further erode the open and undeveloped space between the existing property and the conservation area and listed buildings, adding to the harm to significance.
9. The harm to significance of the conservation area and listed buildings would be less than substantial, but still important given the effects on views and the loss of separation space between modern and historic development. In line with paragraph 134 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), such harm needs to be weighed against the public benefits of the development.
10. The development would contribute an additional dwelling to local housing supply in an accessible urban location, but given the scale of development, the public benefits arising from this would be modest. Thus, the harm to the significance of the conservation area and listed buildings outweighs the public benefits.
11. In conclusion, the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of Hamlet Road Conservation Area, nor would it preserve the setting of listed buildings. Therefore, it would not accord with Policy DM15 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document (2015) which requires development proposals adjacent to a conservation area to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area and views into and through the area, or Policy DM17 which requires proposals to respect the setting of listed buildings including inward views. It would also not meet the aims of the NPPF in terms of not sustaining the significance of the conservation area or the listed buildings, where the public benefits would not outweigh the harm.

Conclusion

12. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR