
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 January 2017

by Simon Warder MA BSc(Hons) DipUD(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J3530/W/16/3160102

Land adjacent to 163 Playford Road, Ipswich IP5 1DD

- 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 Ivor Durrant against the decision of Suffolk Coastal District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/3018/OUT, dated 20 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of four semi-detached properties with associated parking and external works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Layout was not reserved for further approval. Application drawing 4426/3 Rev D includes a proposed street elevation. The appellant's statement advises that this should be treated as indicative only.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - whether the appeal site is sustainably located having regard to national and development plan policies;
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Whether Sustainably Located?

4. The appeal site adjoins a short row of dwellings, but is located in outside of the defined physical limits of any settlement and, therefore, in the countryside for the purposes of Policy SP19 of the Council's Core Strategy (CS)¹. This policy anticipates a minimal proportion of the total housing growth in the countryside. Whilst the appeal site can be regarded as brownfield land, there is no substantive evidence to suggest that the proposed dwellings need a countryside location, which is a requirement of CS Policy SP29. Nor has it been shown that the proposal would meet any of the criteria for housing in the

¹ Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2013

countryside set out in CS Policy DM3. The proposal would not, therefore, comply with these policies.

5. Adjoining the site Playford Road is unlit and has no footpaths. The road is fairly well trafficked and would not provide an attractive route for day to day trips on foot. The appellant has referred to a public footpath which runs from a point some 50m from the site to Rushmere St Andrew. However, the footpath is unsurfaced and crosses an agricultural field. It would not, therefore, be convenient for use during times of darkness or inclement weather. Moreover, I have not been made aware of local services or facilities in Rushmere St Andrew which might meet the day to day needs of future occupiers of the proposed dwellings. Another public footpath, some 300m east of the site, provides a link to Kesgrave. However, this route is significantly longer and involves the use of an unlit road and an unlit and unsurfaced path across agricultural fields.
6. Playford Road is a bus route. However, I have not been provided with evidence on the destination, timing or frequency of services. I cannot be assured that they would provide a convenient travel option. Therefore, whilst future occupiers may use a bicycle for some trips, I consider that the majority would be by private car. As such, the proposal would not accord with National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) paragraphs 17, 34 and 35 which seek to locate development to give priority to pedestrian, cycle and public transport movements. I note that the Inspector who considered an earlier appeal four semi-detached houses at the appeal site² reached a similar conclusion.
7. Consequently, I find that the proposal would not be sustainably located having regard to national and development plan policies.

Character and Appearance

8. The appeal site is largely hard surfaced and adjoins the single storey dwelling at No 163. However, it is free of substantial built development and is bounded by undeveloped countryside to the north and west and by Playford Road, which is rural in character, to the south. As such, the site contributes positively to the openness of the landscape. The proposed buildings would be separated from No 163 by the driveway for that property and the access and parking spaces for the new dwellings. The new buildings would, therefore, be set apart from the nearest established built development and would represent a significant incursion into the undeveloped landscape. The planting on the site's north and west boundaries would filter views to a limited degree. However, it would not effectively screen two storey buildings of the scale and type shown on application drawing 4426/3 Rev D.
9. The form and appearance of the proposed dwellings shown indicatively on the application drawing would not be out of keeping with the adjoining row. To that extent, the proposal would not conflict with Framework paragraph 64 which advises that permission should be refused for development of poor design. However, by virtue of their scale, layout and location, the new buildings would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the countryside. As such, the proposal would conflict with CS Policy SP29 insofar as it seeks to sustain the countryside as an important environmental asset and

² Appeal ref: APP/J3530/W/15/3140445

paragraph 17 of the Framework inasmuch as it requires regard to be had to the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Other Matters

10. I have had regard to the other concerns expressed locally, but none has led me to a different overall conclusion.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

11. Framework paragraphs 7 and 8 require the social, economic and environmental roles of sustainability to be considered together. Framework paragraph 47 seeks to boost the supply of housing. The creation of four new dwellings would make a modest contribution to the supply of housing in the area and, therefore, to the social role of sustainability. The proposal would also make a very limited and short term contribution to the economic role of sustainability through the construction activity. It also draws some support from Framework paragraph 17 to the extent that it sets out a preference for the use of previously developed land.
12. However, I have concluded that the development would not be sustainably located and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would, therefore, have negative effects on the environmental and social roles of sustainability. The adverse impacts of granting permission would, therefore, significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposal.
13. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would not amount to sustainable development and so is not supported by the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in Framework paragraph 14.
14. For the reasons set out above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Simon Warder

INSPECTOR