

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

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

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

Decision date: 3rd April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/E3525/W/16/3166004
7 Diomed Drive, Great Barton IP31 2TD

- 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 & Mrs Stuart & Sara Davey against the decision of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/1414/FUL, dated 30 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is (i) 1no. dwelling (following demolition of existing garage); (ii) two storey side extension to existing dwelling; (iii) 2no. two bay detached garages; (iv) associated vehicular access works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development given above is taken from the Council's decision notice because the description on the application form does not clarify the location and size of the extension to the existing dwelling. On the appeal form, the appellants indicate that they are content to use the Council's description and have provided a copy of the Council's amended wording.
3. Both main parties highlight that extant planning permission exists for various extensions to 7 Diomed Drive (application ref DC/16/0442). This includes a two storey side extension to the north-east and a single storey side extension incorporating garage to the south-west. I have been provided with images in the appellants' appeal statement comparing the extant permission with the appeal scheme.
4. The extant permission provides the appellants with a fallback position which, as it could be implemented should the appeal fail, is an important material consideration that carries great weight for the purposes of my decision. My reasoning will consider the differences between the extant permission and the proposed development.

Main Issue

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

6. There is some disagreement between the Council, the appellants and interested parties as to whether Diomed Drive forms part of The Park / Hall Park area of Great Barton which is formally recognised in the development plan for its local distinctiveness. The development plan extracts that have been provided with this appeal are not conclusive. Nevertheless, Diomed Drive has a spacious and open character and appearance, with wide detached properties on generously sized plots and ample garden space. Gaps between properties vary, but are particularly wide along the west side of Diomed Drive including the appeal site.
7. The extant permission would result a substantially wider property at 7 Diomed Drive with a small loss of garden space to accommodate the extensions. The appeal scheme would cover a similar footprint to the extant permission, albeit the new house would be to the side of the existing house rather than extending forward of the existing building line. The loss of garden space in the appeal scheme would be broadly similar to the extant permission and so there would be no material harm in terms of the openness of the area.
8. The new dwelling and extended dwelling would be sited a similar distance from the side boundaries as the extant permission. However, the gap between the two dwellings would be tight, notwithstanding their sympathetic architectural design and use of half-hipped and cat-slide roofs in particular. Furthermore, due to the central positioning of the existing dwelling within its plot, the amount of space between the existing dwelling and the side boundary with High Silvers is limited. As such, the new dwelling would occupy a narrow plot and present a narrow front elevation. The dwelling would look cramped and not in keeping with the wider plots and properties that characterise Diomed Drive. Thus, there would be harm to the area's character and appearance.
9. The proposed two-storey side extension to the existing dwelling is similar to the extant permission and would be in keeping with surrounding properties in terms of scale and spacing. Additionally, the two detached garages would be subservient in size and siting, while the associated vehicular access works are minor. These elements would have limited negative effects on the open and spacious character and appearance of the area, but do not diminish the harm caused by the proposed dwelling.
10. In conclusion, the proposed new dwelling would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. Therefore, the development would not accord with Policy CS3 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy 2010 and Policies DM2 and DM22 of the Joint Development Management Policies Document 2015. Amongst other things, these policies require high quality design that has an understanding of local context and responds to its surroundings. The development would also fail to meet the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework in terms of securing good design that responds to local character.

Other Matters

11. The development would provide some benefits in terms of additional housing in a location with reasonable access to services and facilities, and would be energy efficient and provide employment during the construction process. However, given the scale of development, these benefits are modest and do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

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

Tom Gilbert-Wooldridge

INSPECTOR