

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCI Arb MCIL

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

Decision date: 10th April 2017

Appeal Reference: APP/W3520/D/16/3166040

Land at 2 Hare and Hounds Corner, Hemingstone IP6 9RW

- 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 M Howells against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application (reference 3919/16, dated 16 September 2016) was refused by notice dated 5 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is described in the application form as an "extension to existing outbuilding to provide swimming pool and ancillary residential accommodation".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary point

2. The drawings that were submitted with the application and appeal are manifestly inaccurate in respect of the existing site layout. However, a revised site location plan has been submitted (drawing number 2646_052), to show the area of the application site edged red and the area of adjoining land in the same ownership edged blue. Although the modified drawing has not been the subject of local consultation and is not entirely accurate in respect of the site as a whole, it appears to better represent the physical characteristics of the site and it has been taken into account in this Decision.

Main issue

3. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site lies in a rural area where the predominant land use is agricultural, although there are some commercial uses nearby. Indeed, the land and buildings immediately to the west of the site are commercial in appearance. Nevertheless, number 2 Hare and Hounds Corner is one of a pair of modest dwellings located at an approximately right-angled junction on the relatively busy B1078 road.
5. There is an extensive area of land associated with number 2 Hare and Hounds Corner, wrapping around the plot belonging to the neighbouring dwelling, on

the corner itself. The existing dwellings face the secondary road but the appeal site has a frontage to both that and the main road.

6. Some landscaping works have evidently been carried out to the rear of the existing house and the extensive area of ground in the northern part of the area in the same ownership has been cultivated. It has the appearance of having been incorporated into the residential curtilage, although it has been described in the context of the latest plan (referred to above) as an "adjoining paddock". There is no clear physical boundary between the "paddock" and the garden land, the area appears to have been more carefully maintained as a whole and additional outbuildings (a shed and a playhouse) have been placed in the area of the "paddock".
7. From its physical appearance, changes to the land seem to have been made relatively recently but the northernmost part of the whole site (edged blue on the latest plan) does not have the appearance of a "paddock" and the new outbuildings are not accurately shown on the plans.
8. Within the northern part of the application site (next to the "paddock" area) a substantial two-storey building has been built. It is described as an "annex building", and seems to be ancillary to the primary residential use of the site, at the original house. This "annex building" has a large open ground floor, laid out as a living space, recreation area and study area, with two bedrooms and two bathrooms on the first floor.
9. It is now proposed that this "annex building" should be extended by the construction of a large swimming pool complex to the west, incorporating a swimming pool, sauna and shower on the ground floor, with a "home office" and "cinema" on the first floor. The extension would be built in the same style as the existing "annex" and would be of a similar scale.
10. Among other things, policies in the National Planning Policy Framework recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and are aimed at conserving and enhancing the natural environment (as stated at paragraph 17, for example).
11. Local policies reinforce the national approach, aiming to protect the character of the countryside. In particular, Policies CS1 and CS2 of the Mid Suffolk Core Strategy (which was adopted in September 2008) include a specific aim of restricting development in the countryside.
12. The proposed extension would add a significant bulk to the existing "annex" and would further suburbanise the appeal site. The original dwelling was a modest rural semi-detached home whereas the project that is the subject of this appeal would create a large building in an isolated location, further eroding the rural character of the area. The finished building would include leisure facilities, including the proposed swimming pool, but would also include areas that could readily be used as living accommodation. The finished building would not be obviously ancillary to the original house and it would be disproportionately large in its context, and visually intrusive in the countryside.
13. In short, I have concluded that the harm that would be done to the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area clearly and decisively outweighs the benefits of the project. Hence, I have concluded that the

scheme before me would conflict with the aim of protecting countryside which is set out in Section 12 of the 'National Planning Policy Framework' and reinforced by policies in the Development Plan.

14. I have noted the suggestion that a restrictive condition could be attached to the proposed extension, though planning permission would be needed in any case for its use as a separate dwelling. The imposition of such a condition would not overcome the objections that I have identified, however.
15. For all these reasons, I am convinced that the appeal must fail and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations (including the alternative scheme that has been put forward), I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR