
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 April 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 2nd May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W0530/W/16/3165611

Fountain Farm, Park Lane, Gamlingay SG19 3PD

- 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 G Bartram against the decision of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref S/2074/16/FL, dated 4 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling and detached double garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Gamlingay is a fairly large village with a reasonable range of services. The settlement has a nucleated shape based around the commercial centre of the village. Radiating out from this central spoke are various roads heading out towards other settlements, with one such road being Green End/Heath Road, out towards the south west. Park Lane lies on the northern side of Heath Road, and is a fairly short cul-de-sac serving a small number of dwellings. Although sited outside of the physical limits of the village, the settlement is easily reached in a short walk, and the Council consider the site to be sustainably located; based on all that I have seen and read I have no reason to disagree with this view.
 4. The dwellings located along Park Lane are sited in roughly rectangular plots on both sides of the lane and have reasonable areas of land surrounding them. There is a bungalow sited on the western side of its junction with Heath Road. The appeal site is located on the east side of the unmade lane; an open field separates the site from the Heath Road, with the site itself largely hidden from the street by a thick belt of coniferous trees. Only the roofscapes are visible of Fountain Farm and an adjacent new build property.
 5. Both of these houses are red brick bungalows, with Fountain Farm being an 'L' shaped building with its main axis sited roughly east to west, and the side axis north to south. 'Plot 1' was under construction at the time of my visit, and occupies an area of land between Fountain Farm and Park Lane in a rectangular
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shaped plot with a reasonable rear garden. Plot 1 has two gables to the front and a single central dormer window, and its front elevation lines up with the main building line of Fountain Farm. A single driveway serves both houses, with a range of outbuildings located adjacent to this driveway.

6. The proposal seeks to remove one such outbuilding, and construct a new 2 bedroom dormer bungalow. The property would utilise an existing garage to its west side, with a small garden provided on the east side. The house would back onto the coniferous hedge, which at the time of my visit had been cut back and reduced, yet remained fairly substantial. As part of the proposal a new detached double garage to serve Fountain Farm would be built to the east of the Farmhouse.
7. The dwelling would be laid out so that its front door would face west, on the gable end of the property. However, aside from the lack of a door, the visual façade of the building would face to the north. This would include three windows at ground floor level and two large dormer windows above, and would directly face the southernmost elevation of Fountain Farm, separated from this property by only a narrow driveway.
8. This proximity to the existing dwelling, especially when combined with the siting of the proposal very close to the hedgeline to the rear would make the property appear cramped. Whilst the proposal would not be especially visible from public areas, the size of the proposed house, shown on the plan to be some 91.5m² would also appear incongruous and out of place in its surroundings, when compared to the 109m² size of Plot 1 and the considerably larger Fountain Farm, and the scale and proportions of the property, in producing a dwelling of reasonable height but with a restricted floorplan would also appear out of place when compared to Plot 1, Fountain Farm, and other surrounding development.
9. I do not agree that the siting of the proposal would provide a sense of interest from a possible building conversion. The design of the structure would not appear as a converted building, instead giving the impression of a new build property dominated by the five proposed dormer windows and cramped into its plot on the very edge of the appeal site. Computer generated images (CGI) are submitted in support of the proposal; however, I consider these somewhat misleading as the surrounds of the property are not shown accurately, such as the southern plot boundary and the retained garage.
10. There is no dispute between the parties that the Council are unable to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. In such circumstances the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that relevant development plan policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date. However, in this case the social and economic benefits derived from a single house would be fairly limited, and I consider that the harm caused to the character and appearance of the area by the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh such benefits. The proposal would thus not constitute the sustainable development for which there is a presumption in favour.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a significant adverse effect upon the character and appearance of the area. The proposal

would be contrary to Policy DP/2 of the Local Development Framework¹, which states that all new development must be of high quality design and should preserve or enhance the character of the local area, being compatible with its location and appropriate in terms of scale, mass, form, siting and proportion in relation to the surrounding area. The proposal would also be contrary to the Framework, which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people.

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

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR

¹ South Cambridgeshire District Council Local Development Framework Development Control Policies Development Plan Document July 2007