

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 June 2017

by H Lock BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 05 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K2610/D/17/3174017

156 Wroxham Road, Sprowston, NORWICH, NR7 8DE

- 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 C Hansell against the decision of Broadland District Council.
 - The application Ref. 20162165, dated 16 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 February 2017.
 - The development proposed is first floor extension to side of detached house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The description of development in the heading and decision above has been taken from the planning application form. However, in Part E of the appeal form a different wording has been entered. Neither of the main parties has provided written confirmation that a revised description of development has been agreed. Accordingly, I have used the one given on the original application.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (1) the character and appearance of the street scene; and (2) the living conditions of neighbouring residents, with particular reference to outlook, access to light and privacy.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site is located on Wroxham Road, which the parties acknowledge is a long road containing buildings of various periods and designs, and with varying space intervals between buildings. The appeal property is one of a clearly defined stretch of detached and semi-detached houses which share design characteristics. This group of houses retains a sense of space between buildings as a result of the openness above linked garages which separate individual properties.
 5. Along the length of Wroxham Road there are individually designed properties but also groups of housing of their own shared design, appearance and
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materials, presumably as a result of being built at the same time as part of small developments. As acknowledged by the Council, gaps between buildings vary along the road. In this context, the stretch of dwellings between Merlin Avenue and Goshawk Mews within which the appeal property is located are no more distinct than other groupings along the road, but they do retain a greater sense of space than many buildings as a result of the gaps above garages.

6. The proposed first-floor extension would halve the first-floor gap between the appeal property and 154 Wroxham Road, and would diminish any sense of space around the existing building. Whilst the Council opposes development within the gap in principle, I find that this loss of space is exacerbated by the overall size and design of the addition. The resultant property and the loss of space would be out of keeping with the other dwellings in the group, and would detract from the character and appearance of the street scene at this point.
7. I am mindful of the other extensions built within walking distance of the appeal site, and which have been identified by the appellant. However, none appear to be directly comparable in terms of scale, design, and/or relationship with neighbouring properties. Whilst many extensions have reduced the gap between buildings, these are not necessarily within housing groups where the intervals are so regular and discernible.
8. Moreover, limited information has been supplied of the planning permissions which gave rise to these extensions, and the policy frameworks against which they were assessed. Although the appellant advises that the permission¹ at 126 Wroxham Road was granted in May 2016, limited information of the rationale for the decision has been provided, and in any case the context would appear to differ from the appeal site.
9. Whilst I note the stated need for the extension, to provide additional accommodation for the appellants' growing family, this would not outweigh the harm which has been identified.
10. I therefore conclude that the loss of the gap as a result of the proposed extension would detract from the character and appearance of the street scene, in conflict with the aims of Policy GC4 of the Council's Development Management DPD 2015 (DPD), which seeks high standards of design which avoids significant detrimental impact, and pays adequate regard to the environment, character and appearance of an area and reinforces local distinctiveness in matters such as the treatment of space, appearance and scale; and with Policy 2 of the Sprowston Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP), which amongst other criteria requires buildings to be of an appropriate scale, form and massing and to have regard to spacing between buildings; and with the general design aims of Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk 2011, and amended 2014 (JCS).

Living Conditions

11. The Sprowston Parish Council regard the proposal as unneighbourly, and neighbouring residents have raised more specific concerns that include the effect on outlook, access to light and privacy. However, whilst the proposed extension would be large, I do not consider that it would diminish the outlook

¹ Application ref. 20160492

and access to light for occupants of any neighbouring dwelling to a material degree. Furthermore, the proposed rear-facing window would serve a bathroom and as such would not give rise to material overlooking of the closest dwelling.

12. Other issues raised by residents, such as the effect on property value or the ability to construct a neighbouring extension are private civil matters and not material to this appeal.

13. In this regard, I therefore find no conflict with the aims of DPD Policy GC4, JCS Policy 2 and NDP Policy 2, but this does not alter my conclusions on the first main issue.

Conclusion

14. In conclusion, the National Planning Policy Framework establishes a presumption in favour of sustainable development, and part of its environmental strand is to contribute to protecting and enhancing the built environment. A core planning principle of the Framework is to always seek to secure high quality design, but for the reasons given above the proposal would not comply with this principle and would not be sustainable development supported through the Framework. As a consequence, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR