

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 July 2017

by L Fleming BSc (Hons) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/F2605/W/17/3170501

Spencer Lodge, Stone Road, Dereham NR19 1LJ

- 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 Mark French against the decision of Breckland District Council.
 - The application Ref 3PL/2016/1206/O, dated 5 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is one residential detached dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was submitted in outline with all detailed matters reserved apart from the access. I have dealt with the appeal on that basis, treating the plans as illustrative except for where they relate to the proposed access.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site mainly comprises an area of overgrown and unused land in a residential area between Spencer Lodge and Oak View. The majority of the dwellings in the area are detached properties set in spacious plots, facing Stone Road giving the area a spacious and relatively formal character and appearance.
5. An appeal relating to a proposal to erect a bungalow on the appeal site was dismissed in May 2012¹. This appeal decision took account of another appeal proposing a bungalow on the appeal site which was also dismissed in January 2010². I am not aware of any significant developments nearby which have taken place since May 2012 which have altered the character or appearance of the area in the vicinity of the appeal site in any way. Furthermore, the policies referred to in the May 2012 appeal decision are the same policies referred to in the Council's decision notice relating to the appeal scheme before me.

¹ Appeal Reference APP/F2605/A/12/2172613

² Appeal Reference APP/F2605/A/09/2112829

6. I acknowledge the dwellings to south of the appeal site including Oak View and Oak Lodge and the dwellings on Lisbon Road occupy smaller plots and are more compact than the dwellings on Stone Road. However, the proposed development would be accessed from Stone Road and would be noticeable in the south side of Stone Road street scene through glimpses of the proposed development through the access road.
7. The undeveloped appeal site separating Oak View from Spencer Lodge contributes to the spacious character and appearance of the area in and around Stone Road. I acknowledge that part of an existing outbuilding would be removed and an existing semi-detached garage would be incorporated into the proposed development. However, the illustrative details show the proposed dwelling would fill the majority of the plot leaving little space between it and Oak View and Spencer Lodge. Thus, consistent with the Inspector's findings in May 2012, I find the proposal would appear uncharacteristically cramped and would erode the spacious quality of the area, thus harming the character and appearance of the area.
8. For these reasons the proposal would fail to accord with Policies DC2 and DC16 of the Breckland Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (2009) (DPD) which seek to achieve high standards of design for new housing and ensure new development preserves or enhances the character of an area. For the same reasons the proposal would also be in conflict with the good design aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).
9. In reaching these conclusions I acknowledge the appellant's comments about whether or not the Council is able to demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land within the terms of paragraph 47 of the Framework. However, due to the lack of detailed evidence to substantiate the claims I am unable to reach a definitive conclusion on this matter.
10. I acknowledge the appeal site is in a location which benefits from good public transport and easy access to local services and employment. I also note the economic benefits associated with construction and new customers for local businesses. I also acknowledge that the proposal would represent an efficient use of land.
11. However, even if the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply and thus the weight I afford to the conflict with Policies DC2 and DC16 of the DPD is reduced and increased weight is afforded to the benefit of the provision of a dwelling, when all of the benefits are combined they are significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm I have identified to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons set out above, on balance the proposal is in conflict with the development plan and does not amount to sustainable development as set out in the Framework. Thus having had regard to all other matters raised, I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Fleming

INSPECTOR