
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 June 2017

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert(Urb) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1st August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K0425/W/17/3171558

Suffolk House, 54 The Green, Wooburn Green HP10 0EU

- 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 Richard Potyka (RAP Building and Developments) against the decision of Wycombe District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/07019/FUL, dated 27 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey rear extension to create a single 1-bedroom flat with associated parking.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Appellant has submitted additional plans showing the removal of timber framing detail to the proposed extension and the layout of the ground floor of Suffolk House. These plans were submitted just before the Council's decision. The Council has stated that the external change overcomes their reason for refusal based on the harm to the Conservation Area. Given the minor nature of these amendments, I am satisfied that no party would be prejudiced by its consideration. On this basis, the plans have been considered in this appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (a) the safety of highway users in and around The Green, having regard to vehicle parking, and (b) whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Wooburn Conservation Area.

Reasons

Highway safety

4. Suffolk House is a three storey building with commercial and residential uses fronting onto The Green. The single storey extension would be to the rear of it and partly within a private vehicle parking area of 15 spaces. Access to this parking area is via Red Lion Way through a gap in a three storey residential building known as The Coach House. In the vicinity of the appeal site, properties facing onto The Green are a mixture of commercial and residential uses whilst along Red Lion Way, fronting properties are mainly residential.

5. On the Green, the A4094, there is some street parking in the vicinity of the appeal site but remaining street areas have restrictions, double-yellow lines, access protection markings and markings associated with a Zebra crossing. Red Lion Way has off street parking for residential properties and unrestricted street parking. Both Red Lion Way and The Green are subject to a 30 mph restriction.
6. The flat extension would effectively result in the additional need for three spaces by removing two parking spaces from the private car park overall and generating a need for 1 parking space under the County Council's Buckinghamshire Countryside Parking Guidance 2015.
7. With evidence, there could be justification to reduce the total amount of parking spaces provided for the existing uses at Suffolk House. The Appellant has provided a parking survey on two working week days in June 2016 for two 24 hours periods when the offices were fully occupied. The survey shows that for much of the time that the additional three parking spaces could be accommodated within the private parking area.
8. However it also shows 13 spaces used 0930-1015 hours and 12 spaces 930 - 1000 hours on the first and second surveyed day within the parking area. There were also peaks of parking space occupation, less in number, at lunch times. Therefore the development would result in one vehicle having to find space elsewhere in one of these morning peak times. At the other peak times, the parking would be close or at capacity with the addition of three parking spaces. Such findings would suggest a need for a more comprehensive parking assessment. In this case, there is little rationale provided for the survey's approach in choosing the two days and how this relates to the operation of Suffolk House in terms of its office and residential uses. The ground floor plan of Suffolk House shows considerable number of rooms and floorspace, together with access to residential use above, which further supports a need for a more detailed assessment. For all these reasons, it has not been demonstrated that the survey has given a true indication of the parking situation over an extended period of time.
9. The Appellant has submitted a licence agreement to show the provision of two car parking spaces at The Red Cow for the occupiers of a company based at Suffolk House. The Appellant indicates no contravention of any planning condition or requirements for this other site. However these spaces may be displacing provision required for this other site in the absence of any detailed parking assessment to show otherwise. In the absence of this, it cannot be proven that any problem of inadequate car parking is being simply transferred from one site to another. In any case, the spaces are located on the other side of The Green and so whilst they are available for use, there is no guarantee that Suffolk House occupiers would not first consider parking in the closer private car park.
10. From what I saw on my site visit, the Red Lion Way public car park was full and people had parked on Red Lion Way to walk to facilities and services in Wooburn. Both the highway authority and a third party also indicate that this car park is heavily used. Therefore there can be no guarantee that the public car park would be available for occupiers and visitors to Suffolk House.
11. In the absence of satisfactory parking provision, drivers would have to search for somewhere to park. With the public car park in heavy use, this would be

likely to necessitate parking along Red Lion Way. The highway authority has identified the narrow width of this road with street parking and the existence of a footway only on the western side. It has also highlighted the need for two way movement with a need for unfettered access to and transversal movement along the road. Therefore the potential burden of additional vehicles spaces parked along Red Lion Way would limit vehicles ability to pass one another safely. This would substantially impact upon the safety of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians.

12. For these reasons, I agree with the Highway Authority's objections in that the proposal would be detrimental to public and highway safety. Accordingly the proposal would conflict with policy CS20 of the Wycombe Development Framework Core Strategy (CS), which amongst other matters, requires appropriate, effective parking provision and vehicular servicing arrangements, and to ensure that all vehicular traffic generated by future development does not materially increase traffic problems, such as congestion.

Character and appearance

13. The appeal site is located to the rear of Suffolk House which has a part neo-Georgian style, part Victorian style façade and some mock-Tudor style painted timber framing. The site is highly visible from a side alley down the flank of Suffolk House, the car park behind it, the Coach House and Red Lion Way.
14. The site is located within Wooburn Conservation Area which comprises a variety of old traditionally styled and constructed dwellings around The Green. It is the historical, architectural and central green qualities that are of significance and value, and are of special interest to the Conservation Area. Suffolk House has mixed attraction given varied designs to different elements. Although it has an overall neutral influence on the qualities of the Conservation Area, the pastiche approach of using Mock Tudor timber cladding is a negative feature.
15. The amended design of the extension would be single storey with a brick and plain tile to match the existing building. By reason of its scale, materials and design, the extension would be of a subservient scale and appearance in relation to Suffolk House. It would assimilate into its wider historical and architectural context by reason of its simple design and appearance.
16. For these reasons, the development would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. Accordingly the proposal would comply with policies G3 and HE6 of the Wycombe District Local Plan to 2011 and policy CS19 of CS, which collectively and amongst other matters, require a high standard of design and layout, the careful assimilation of development into existing townscapes by sensitive design, extensions to be seen as part of a wider whole and that proposals should have the ultimate aim of enhancing the character of Conservation Areas.

Other matters

17. The proposal would result in a dwelling contributing to the Council's deficient 5 year housing land supply in an area which has reasonable access to facilities, services and public transport. However there would be significant harm to the safety of highway users. In this respect the development would not be located and designed to create a safe and secure layout to minimise conflicts between

traffic, cyclists and pedestrians in accordance with paragraph 35 of the Framework. The contribution of one dwelling to housing supply would be small. Therefore the adverse impact of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole. The proposal would not be sustainable development for which the Framework indicates a presumption in favour.

Conclusion

18. The proposal would harm the safety of highway users conflicting with policy CS20 of the CS and the development plan as a whole. The development would not be sustainable and there are no other considerations that indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan and permission should be refused.
19. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including support, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR