
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2017

by R Norman BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/W/17/3173142

21 West End, Old Costessey, Norwich, Norfolk NR8 5AJ

- 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 A and Mrs S Irving against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/2753, dated 21 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling with detached single garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the development on:
 - The character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - The living conditions of adjoining occupiers.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site occupies a prominent position on the junction of West End and Longwater Lane. It is served by an existing access and currently partly comprises garden land for the existing dwelling, No 21 West End, and partly a former commercial yard. On the opposite side of the Longwater Lane junction is a school and West End, surrounding the appeal site, consists of dwellings of a mix of designs. Whilst there are a variety of scales and sizes of dwellings present, they are predominantly 2-storey, consisting of detached and semi-detached properties. There is a significant difference in land levels between this part of West End and the land to the rear of the site on Longwater Lane, which is occupied by playing fields and a community building.
4. The appellant has identified the site as brownfield land. Whilst part of the site forms the access and a small part of the former commercial site to the rear, the majority of the site appears to be in use as domestic garden for No 21. Even so, the Council has stated that redevelopment of the site could be acceptable, and I see no reason to disagree.

5. The appeal site would consist of a rather modest plot when viewed in comparison with the surrounding developments. Whilst there are some examples of dwellings on smaller plots, for example No 34, the prevailing character of this part of West End is of relatively large plots with long rear gardens. As such, the introduction of a dwelling into this site would appear cramped when viewed in the context of the more spacious developments along West End. In addition, although some of the dwellings are semi-detached, the character of this part of West End is of well-spaced dwellings. The siting of the development close to the side elevation of No 21 would appear out of character with the surrounding developments in terms of the separation between properties.
6. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling would be 3-storey in height, with rooms in the roof served by dormer windows to the front and rear. This would result in a dwelling which is significantly taller than the existing dwelling at No 21 and the other dwellings in the immediate surroundings which are 2-storey in the main with some chalet style dwellings present. Although the land level rises significantly from West End along Longwater Lane, this site is clearly related to West End and would result in a large and over dominant dwelling in a very prominent location. The architectural style of the dwelling however would not result in any harm to the character and appearance of the area due to the variety of designs present.
7. Due to its cramped appearance combined with its excessive height and scale, the development would fail to accord with Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (2014) and Policy DM3.8 of the South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (DMPD) (2015), which seek to ensure that development is designed to a high standard, respects local distinctiveness and integrates with the area successfully.

Living Conditions

8. Whilst I note that the windows on the western elevation have been designed and positioned to avoid direct loss of privacy to the adjoining dwelling, the proximity of the development to No 21 would result in a sense of enclosure and a sense of overbearing from the side windows of this existing property, both at ground and first floors. No 21 has a number of windows in the other elevations however the proximity of the 3 storey dwelling to No 21 would result in a dominant development which would be harmful to the living conditions of the occupiers in this instance.
9. The rear elevation would comprise of a single storey element with glazing, a window at first floor level and one window in the gable serving the second-floor. Given the angle and siting of the proposed dwelling and the location of existing dwellings, I consider that there would not be harmful levels of overlooking and loss of privacy to the rear of the properties as a result of the development. The relationship between the rear first and second floor windows and adjoining properties are not unusual for developments of this density.
10. Due to the resultant sense of enclosure and the overbearing impact of the proposed house on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 21, the development would be contrary to Policy 3.13 of the South Norfolk Local Plan DMPD which requires development to ensure a reasonable standard of amenity including consideration of overbearing impacts.

Other Matters

11. The Framework requires new development to contribute to the sustainability of an area in social, economic and environmental terms. It also aims to boost the supply of housing. Because the Council accepts that it cannot demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing the development would result in one new dwelling which would be a social benefit. The potential use of shops and local services by its future occupiers could also be a small economic benefit, as could employment during the construction phase. However, although the tilted balance in paragraph 14 of the Framework would be triggered, the environmental harm identified in my main issues would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the proposed dwelling. Consequently, the proposed development would not be in accordance with the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It would be contrary to the development plan as a whole, and contrary to the Framework which seeks high quality design and a good standard of amenity.

Conclusion

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

R Norman

INSPECTOR