
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 October 2017

by AJ Steen BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7 November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W1525/W/17/3179170

Site at 48 Ridley Road, Broomfield, Chelmsford CM1 7AR

- 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 Kevin Smith of Squirrel Homes against the decision of Chelmsford City Council.
 - The application Ref 17/00343/FUL, dated 23 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2017.
 - The development proposed is to erect a pair of detached bungalows, lay out parking and amenity spaces and alter vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the bungalows on the character and beauty of the rural landscape outside the urban area; and
 - the effect of the proposed bungalows on the character and appearance of the existing building and surrounding area.

Reasons

Rural landscape

3. 48 Ridley Road is located on the edge of the rural area, the rear garden of the property abutting a field containing a stable block. Along with neighbouring gardens, it provides the transition between the city and surrounding countryside. In this location, that countryside extends toward the city between development in a Green Wedge, designated under Policy DC9 of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies Development Plan Document (DPD). The boundary of the Green Wedge is located within the garden.
4. The proposal would result in development of that garden with two bungalows, partly within the designated Green Wedge and which would affect the transition between the city and the surrounding countryside. The amount of built form proposed would be significant over most of the width and much of the depth of the plot such that it would harm that transition.

5. I accept that, given the existing use of the land, it would not extend residential use into the rural landscape and it would be viewed in the context of neighbouring residential development. The alternative planning permission for a chalet bungalow on the site would have a more modest effect given the smaller foot print and not including built development within the designated Green Wedge. I also note that it may be possible to erect outbuildings in the garden. Other development on nearby Post Office Road appears to extend closer to the countryside than that proposed. Nevertheless, the effect of such a large foot print of built development would result in harm to this transition and, consequently, the surrounding landscape.
6. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed bungalows would harm the character and beauty of the rural landscape outside the urban area. As a result, the proposed development would be contrary to Policies DC2 and DC9 of the DPD that seek to protect the character and beauty of the countryside, in particular the open character of the river valleys and floodplains designated as Green Wedges.

Character and appearance

7. Ridley Road is a residential road comprising predominantly semi-detached dwellings within large gardens. A number of infill developments have taken place in the street, including dwellings attached to nos. 24 and 27 on either side of the road where it divides into two cul-de-sacs. The bungalow at The Three Gables and house at no. 46A are detached properties located adjacent to the appeal site and provide substantial properties within spacious gardens at one end of the road. Taking account of these infill developments, the surrounding area retains a varied and spacious character.
8. The proposed bungalows, by contrast, would fill the majority of the width of the site. They would reflect the height of The Three Gables adjacent and would be set on lower ground to the rear of existing dwellings that reduces their visibility from the road. However, the size of the dwellings compared to the site would result in a cramped appearance to the proposal that would contrast with surrounding development. As a result, it would appear incongruous in this location taking account of the spacious character and appearance of surrounding development.
9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed bungalows would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such, the development would be contrary to Policy DC45 of the DPD that seeks an appropriate visual relationship between the proposed buildings and the appearance of existing development in the surrounding area.

Other matters

10. The conflict with Policies DC2, DC9 and DC45 of the DPD is such that the proposal should be regarded as being in conflict with the development plan as a whole. It is therefore necessary to consider whether there are material considerations which indicate that permission should be granted, notwithstanding this conflict.
11. I note that some neighbouring occupiers would prefer the proposed development to the single dwelling previously approved by the Council. I understand that there is concern that the approved dwelling would overlook

neighbouring properties, in addition to the effect of that development on the character and appearance of the area. However, the Council concluded that scheme was satisfactory and I do not consider that the scheme in front of me would provide benefits over that scheme to outweigh the harm I have identified above.

12. The site is located a short distance from services and facilities within Chelmsford. The proposed development would support the local economy during the course of development and following occupation.
13. My attention has been drawn to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) that seeks to secure a boost in the supply of housing. The proposals would add two additional units to the supply of housing that meet relevant standards relating to the size of dwellings, including the modest outside amenity space. The proposed dwellings would be two bedroom properties that I understand would meet identified housing needs and may enable older people to downsize, thereby freeing up family housing. This would provide social benefits from the proposed development.
14. However, the environmental harm of the proposed development to the landscape character of the surrounding countryside and to the character and appearance of the area contrary to the adopted development plan are significant and would outweigh these modest social and economic benefits.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the proposed development would not accord with the development plan. Thus, having had regard to all other matters raised the appeal should be dismissed.

AJ Steen

INSPECTOR