



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 July 2019

by Ian Harrison BA Hons DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Tuesday, 20 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/E3525/W/19/3230159

86 Highfield, Clare, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 8PQ

- 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 Ms P Harding against the decision of St Edmundsbury Borough Council.
 - The application Ref DC/18/2235/FUL, dated 2 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 24 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is a 2 bedroom single storey dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development used above has been taken from the planning application form. The Council used a different description and in Part E of the appeal form it is stated that the description of development has not changed but, nevertheless, 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 in the heading above.
3. Similarly, the address used on the application form, the Council's appeal decision, and the appeal form are inconsistent. In the absence of written confirmation that an alternative has been agreed, I shall use the one given on the original application form as I consider this to be adequate.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect on the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The site is located within an area of terraced bungalows and semi-detached two storey dwellings. An important feature of the immediate locality is the two large areas of open space that are surrounded by roads and footpaths. Most dwellings are formally arranged around the open spaces and set well back from the footpaths which enables the gardens of those dwellings to create a spacious environment, providing a setting for the open spaces and backdrops of soft landscaping and low boundary treatments.

6. The site appears to be a sub-divided part of the garden of the host property which features established trees, other planting, sheds and animal hutches. Although this sub-division and the provision of several small structures is unlike most other surrounding gardens, the site still contributes to the low intensity, landscaping dominated character of the area. The site is in a particularly prominent position relative to the open spaces, being directly opposite the main vehicular approach to one of them and adjacent to the road that links them. The site is also prominent in views from the footway to the north west that leads towards Cavendish Road.
7. The development would see the erection of a detached bungalow at the site, orientated with its front elevation facing the adjacent open space. Two parking spaces would be provided forward of the dwelling which would be accessed from an adjacent communal parking area. Shrub planting would be provided behind the existing fence at the road frontages of the site and a timber fence would be provided to demark the other boundaries of the plot.
8. The dwelling, as a result of its positioning and it being detached, would be at odds with the pattern of development within the locality that is described above. This erosion of the formal arrangement of the dwellings within the locality would have a significantly detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area, which would be exaggerated due to the prominence of the site.
9. Moreover, due to the comparatively small gap between the existing and proposed dwellings, which is unlike the relationship between all other dwellings within the area, the development would appear at odds with the established pattern and layout of the locality. Whilst the appellant has stated that there are no garden size standards within the development plan, in this case the resultant plot sizes and the close proximity of the existing dwelling to the proposed dwelling demonstrates that the development is visually discordant and inconsistent with the character and appearance of the area.
10. The provision of parking across the majority of the site frontage would result in hardstanding being more dominant than at other nearby properties where off-street parking exists. The appellant has highlighted that, in order to reduce on-street parking, deviation from the original layout has occurred to provide the adjacent communal parking area. However, the less prominent positioning of that parking area and the absence of buildings means that the parking area is a more discreet intrusion than the proposed dwelling would be. The effect of the parking area is therefore not comparable to the harmful effect that would arise as a result of the erection of a detached dwelling on this comparatively small, prominent plot.
11. Furthermore, the reduction of soft landscaping at the site would undermine the spacious, well landscaped character of the area. The shrub planting that is proposed would not adequately mitigate this and, whilst the adjacent parking court and the presence of some off-street parking at other sites is noted, it is considered that the parking proposed would be dominating of the site which would exaggerate the other harmful effects that have been identified.
12. The provision of a single storey projection to the rear elevation would contrast with the simplicity of the design and plan form of the existing bungalows. Therefore, whilst elements of the proposal reflect the appearance of the neighbouring bungalows, there are elements which would be markedly different

which would emphasise the conflict with the character and appearance of the area.

13. For the reasons given above, the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the appeal site and the surrounding area. The proposal is therefore contrary to Policies DM2 and DM22 of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document and Policy CS3 of the St Edmundsbury Core Strategy. These policies combine to require that development is of high quality, addresses local context and distinctiveness, maintains a sense of place and local character and has regard to street patterns, groups of buildings and open spaces. The proposal is also contrary to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework which states that development should be of high quality design and maintain an area's character.

Other Matters

14. The Parish Council has supported the proposal on the grounds that the proposal would represent the provision of a smaller dwelling which there is a need for and would not cause harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents. No objection has been raised by the Council on these grounds and I see no reason to disagree with that stance, but these factors do not outweigh the harm that has been identified above. Similarly, the suggested provision of an electric car charging point would not outweigh the harm that has been identified.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

Ian Harrison

INSPECTOR