
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2019 by C McDonagh BA (Hons), MA

by Susan Ashworth BA (Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/D/19/3234034

Pemberton House, 15 Needham Road, Harleston, IP20 9JY

- 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 George Sekulla against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/0389, dated 15 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is construction of a front garden/drive wall and part of western boundary. Wall will be double skinned with supporting piers at a pitch of 3.8m. Entrance will have an entry drive of 6.6m from Needham Road to the walled entrance. The wall itself will be a minimum of 4m from Needham Road carriageway and on the edge of the highway boundary. The wall height will be 1.8m and the piers reaching 1.95m.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issue under consideration in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the streetscene and local landscape.

Reasons for the recommendation

4. The appeal site comprises a detached, two-storey dwelling of brick construction and a tiled roof. To the front, a single-storey triple garage sits within a gravelled courtyard, with brick columns forming the entrance to the site from Needham Road. A grass verge separates the highway from the curtilage of the dwelling, with open fields on 3 sides.
5. The proposal entails the erection of a boundary wall to the front and one side of the. The wall would be 1.8m high, with regularly spaced piers projecting to 1.95m and decorative caps bringing to total height from ground level to 2.3m. The wall would run along the full width of the front boundary of the property before turning at a right angle to project along the side boundary. The wall would be built from red brick to match the house.

6. The appeal site occupies a key position when approaching the town along Needham Road. The openness of the front of the property contributes positively to the area and aids in the transition from open countryside to built-up form. Boundary treatments along this road are generally soft, with hedges and trees prevalent on the approach to the village. I acknowledge the neighbouring properties at 13 and 13a Needham Road both feature walls with piers of a similar overall height and materials. However, these walls differ from the appeal proposal in that they incorporate railings on top of dwarf walls to retain a sense of openness, and feature trees behind the walls to further soften this impact. In contrast, the wall proposed at the appeal site would be of solid construction, creating an imposing structure at odds with the rural feel to the edge of the settlement.
7. While I understand there would be private benefits to the appellant relating to noise, privacy and security, I am not convinced, on the basis of all I have seen and read, that such measures could not be achieved with a more sympathetic design of boundary treatment.
8. Policy 4.5 of the South Norfolk Local Plan Development Management Policies Document (LP) requires that all development should respect, conserve and where possible, enhance the landscape character of its immediate and wider environment. The appellant disputes the application of this Policy due to the appeal site's location within the settlement boundary of Harleston. However, I have nothing before me to indicate the Policy is not valid due to the location of the proposal. Accordingly, it is a determinative policy for the purposes of this appeal.
9. For the reasons set out above, the proposal would have a detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the streetscene and local landscape. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to LP Policy 4.5 as set out above. It would also be contrary to Policies 1.4, 3.6 and 3.8 of the LP and Policy 2 of the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (JCS), which collectively seek to ensure development respects local distinctiveness and is of high-quality design.

Other matters

10. Both the Council and appellant mention suggested amendments discussed during the application process. However, these are not before me and as such I have considered the appeal as it was submitted.

Recommendation

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

C McDonagh

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

12. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

S Ashworth INSPECTOR

