



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 September 2019

by P Mileham BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W3520/W/19/3232003

Land to the west of The Oaks and to the south of the entrance to The Grange, Green Road, Woolpit Green, Bury St. Edmunds IP30 9RG

- 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 and Mrs Tim and Kathy Parker against the decision of Mid Suffolk District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/18/04280, dated 24 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 30 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as a full planning application for the erection of a single detached dwelling and annexe and garaging with access off Green Road, Woolpit Green.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for Costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr and Mrs Tim and Kathy Parker against Mid Suffolk District Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the setting of nearby listed buildings.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is an area of flat open grassed land bound by mature hedging. To the eastern and southern boundaries, there is further mature hedging including numerous significant trees. To the south of the site is Abbey Cottage, a timber framed thatched cottage which is a Grade II listed building. To the east are a number of detached single and two storey dwellings that follow Green Road. There are three listed buildings in the vicinity of the site these being The Grange, Grange Farmhouse and Abbey Farmhouse.
5. Abbey Cottage is directly south of the site, its significance is defined by not only the features of the building itself, but also as a result of its rural setting and its historic relationships with the nearby Grange Farmhouse and Abbey Farmhouse. Abbey Farmhouse is to the south-west of the appeal site. Abbey Farmhouse is screened from the site by a number of significant trees and is further south of the tree line than Abbey Cottage. This additional separation

distance would limit any effect of the proposed development, and as such, the development would not harm the significance of Abbey Farmhouse. The Grange is further away from the proposed development than Abbey Farmhouse, and as such, due to the distance between the appeal site and The Grange along with the intervening approved planning permission for two dwellings, the development would not result in harm to the significance of The Grange. Abbey Cottage is the closest heritage asset to the proposed development. The cottage's visual and historic setting extends beyond its immediate curtilage across the appeal site which was once a former green (Woolpit Green). The openness of the site along with the land immediately to the west provides opportunities for views between Abbey Cottage and Grange Farmhouse. These views allow the cottage to be experienced from beyond its immediate curtilage due to the flat, undeveloped nature of the site.

6. The appeal site was historically associated with Abbey Cottage and forms part of its setting. Whilst its setting has undoubtedly changed over time as a result of 19th and 20th century landscape management, the site still largely influences the setting immediately in front of the cottage. However, a recent planning permission granted for two dwellings at the front of the site adjoining Green Road would result in a reduction in the extent of the setting. The proposed development would introduce additional residential activity and domestication into the site, eroding the remaining part of the rural setting of Abbey Cottage and fundamentally changing its character.
7. The proposal would result in the development of four separate structures including a large principal two storey detached dwelling, an ancillary two storey building linked by a pergola, a separate annexe and a separate detached garage. Notwithstanding the planning permission granted adjacent Green Road, the addition of four further structures, particularly having regard to the scale of the principal dwelling and its ancillary accommodation, would occupy a large part of the former green. The proposal would introduce a number of other large structures into the landscape at a different orientation to the surrounding properties. As such, the proposed buildings would be in distinct contrast to the surrounding pattern of development, which is principally linear. They would be incongruous in this context. The siting of the proposed development to the centre of the site would have the effect of removing any remaining opportunities to appreciate Abbey Cottage from within and beyond its setting. This would compromise its setting and result in a proposal that would not assimilate well with the surrounding pattern of development.
8. Whilst there is a significant amount of screening between the site and Abbey Cottage, and a relatively large separation distance, the physical relationship between the cottage and its setting would nonetheless be eroded. This would be as a result of the proposal's scale which would remove any remaining partial views of the cottage from the area of Green Road in the vicinity of the site entrance. This harmful effect would be in combination with the two dwellings granted planning permission to the north of the site. Whilst I agree with the appellants that the level of harm to the setting is towards the lower end of 'less than substantial harm' due to the landscaping available at the present day, the further erosion of the setting still results in harm. The appellants have proposed further planting to limit the visibility of the proposed development. No details have been supplied on how this proposed planting would mitigate the effect of the proposed development. As such, this is not sufficient to alter my findings in this regard.

9. As such, the proposed development would result in a harmful effect on the significance of the heritage asset, and therefore fail to preserve the setting of the Listed Building. Section 66(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting, to which I attached considerable importance and weight.
10. In the context of paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) the aforementioned harm to the setting of Abbey Cottage, would be less than substantial. The Council has indicated that it does not have a five year supply of housing land, and as such, the addition of a single dwelling with an energy efficient design would add to the supply albeit the energy efficiency element would be required of all development. The proposal would also provide a home for existing local residents to stay within the community. Whilst an additional dwelling would contribute to the vitality of the rural community and the viability of services and businesses, the contribution from a single dwelling would be limited. Opportunities for biodiversity enhancement would be offset by the loss of biodiversity resulting from the development of the site, and in this regard would have a neutral effect. As such, the contribution made from these benefits would be limited, and not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified.
11. Although the proposal would preserve Abbey Farmhouse and The Grange, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the proposed development would cause harm to the setting of Abbey Cottage. Therefore, the proposal would not accord with Policy HB1 of the Mid Suffolk Local Plan (1998) which seeks to protect the character, appearance and setting of listed buildings or with the conservation requirements of paragraph 196 of the Framework in respect of Heritage Assets.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons outlined above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal is dismissed.

P Mileham

INSPECTOR