
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2019

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29 November 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/19/3236489

4 Britten Close, Aldeburgh IP15 5HS

- 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 R & C Gawthrop against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/19/2259/FUL, dated 4 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is for alterations/extensions to flats 2 and 4, first floor extensions to create an additional flat.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the area and;
 - the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers at Nos 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14 Britten Close with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is located in a residential area typified by brick and tile dwellings some with weatherboard or rendered elevations. Britten Close has a mixture of two-storey houses and flats in varying styles that are set out in short-terraces or blocks and is characterised by modest amenity areas which help to soften the built form.
4. The host dwellings at 2 and 4 Britten Close comprise a two-storey block that faces onto Church Farm Road and is separated on both flanks, at a relatively short distance, from the terraces of Nos 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14 Britten Close by small grassed areas, soft planting and trees. To the rear of the block there is a hardstanding set behind low shrubs which appears to provide four parking spaces for the occupiers of No 2 and 4.
5. The proposal is to extend the host dwelling to three-storeys, including the provision of an additional flat, and to widen the footprint of the dwelling to the side of the existing plot. An additional parking space associated with the dwellings will be provided through the re-configuration of the existing hardstanding and the use of some of the side amenity area.

6. Whilst the drawings provided show that the proposal is possible on the plot available the height and mass of the development would appear incongruous with the surrounding built environment; which in the immediate vicinity is typified by two-storey rather than three-storey dwellings that are separated by planting, trees or lawns. As such, the height of the proposal is at odds with the prevailing street-scene. There may well be similarly sized dwellings nearby but nonetheless, in this particular location, the proposal would be overly prominent and appear out of place in its immediate setting. Moreover, the mass of the proposal would result in a visually cramped development due to its' extended width and reduced amenity space. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policy DM21 of the Suffolk Coastal District Local Plan Core Strategy and Development Management Policies, Development Plan Document 2013 (SCDLP) which says, amongst other things, that proposals should relate well to the scale and character of their surroundings particularly in terms of their siting, height, massing and form. For similar reasons, the proposal would be contrary to the policies of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), including Paragraph 127 which indicates that developments should be visually attractive and be sympathetic to the local character of the surrounding built environment.

Living conditions

7. The main parties agree that the proposal would have a limited effect on the daylight and sunlight experienced by the neighbouring properties. This is reinforced by the unchallenged daylight and sunlight study submitted by the appellant. However, due to the close proximity of the proposal to Nos 5, 7, 9, 10, 12 and 14, the cumulative effects of the development, including the reduced amenity space, would create a sense of enclosure that would cause harm to the outlook and living conditions of the neighbouring occupants due to its overbearing scale and mass in this already tight-knit location. For these reasons, the proposal is contrary to Policy SP22 of the SCDLP which says that development should not result in 'town cramming' and retain the sensitive environment generally; particularly the setting and edges of towns, and Paragraph 127(f) of the Framework which indicates that planning decisions should create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible and which promote health and well-being, with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

8. The appeal site is located within 13km of a protection zone of European designated sites; namely Alde-Ore Estuary Special Protection Area, Ramsar site Minsmere to Walberswick Heaths, and the Marshes Special Area of Conservation. However, it has not been necessary for me to undertake an appropriate assessment of the proposal under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 given my overall conclusion on the main issues.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR