



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2019

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D0840/W/19/3234910
20 Edgcumbe Road, St Austell PL25 5DX

- 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 Daniel Mitchelmore of AD&DM Ltd against the decision of Cornwall Council.
 - The application Ref PA19/02749, dated 25 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 August 2019.
 - The development proposed is a detached split-level dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a detached split-level dwelling at 20 Edgcumbe Road, St Austell PL25 5DX in accordance with the terms of the application Ref PA19/02749, dated 25 March 2019, and subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 051 DM Rev A, 052 DM Rev A, 053 DM Rev B.
 - 3) The dwelling hereby permitted shall not be occupied until surface water drainage works have been implemented in accordance with details that shall first have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The surface water drainage works shall be retained thereafter in accordance with the approved details.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Edgcumbe Road is a residential section of the A3058, which makes a sinuous uphill climb in a northward direction, at the west end of the town of St Austell. It contains a mixture of houses and bungalows set in close-knit rows. Whilst many directly front the highway, some are set at an angle towards it.
4. The appeal site is an area of open land to the south of the detached bungalow No 20 Edgcumbe Road, which fronts Edgcumbe Road on its east side. It reads as a somewhat anomalous, vacant plot within the street scene. To the south is No 16 Edgcumbe Road, which is the first in a row of 9 dormer bungalows of uniform siting and design.

5. The proposal seeks to erect a dwelling. Its integral garage would front the highway, with the front floor of the property within its north, side elevation. As the land drops away further into the site, the dwelling would be split-level, with a single storey element to the front, and two storeys at the rear.
6. Behind the site, two dwellings, Nos 20a and 20b Edgcumbe Road, were under construction at the time of my visit¹. In order to maintain access to these houses, a new driveway would run between No 20 and the proposed house. Whilst this would create a plot narrower than No 20 and No 16, there are a variety of plots widths across Edgcumbe Road, many of which are notably narrow. Many of the narrower plots have driveways to one side of front lawns, and the proposal would be laid out in much the same way, albeit with the driveway shared.
7. The siting of the dwelling would maintain the general building line, spacing and housing density on the east side of Edgcumbe Road. Whilst split level dwellings are not a feature of the street scene, variety is, and the house would not be out of place for this reason. Public perception of the two-storey element of the building would be reduced by its location to the rear, in any event.
8. The garage door would be the principal feature facing Edgcumbe Road, and the dwelling would not address the public realm with particular aplomb. However, other properties along Edgcumbe Road turn away from the highway to an extent, some are largely hidden behind greenery and some, such as a number of the bungalows to the south, have elevations which are somewhat hidden below street level. Given the circumstances, the proposal would not be a cramped or incongruous addition to Edgcumbe Road.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have an acceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area. It would accord with the relevant design aims of Policies 1, 2, 12 and 21 of the Cornwall Local Plan Strategic Policies 2010-2030 (adopted 2016) (CLP) and the National Planning Policy Framework. I find no conflict with the cited guidance of the Cornwall Design Guide (2013) nor the Chief Planning Officer's Advice Note: Good Design in Cornwall (2017).

Other Matters

10. Whilst the rear first floor of the proposed dwelling would allow overlooking towards neighbouring properties to the south and west, I find the level of overlooking that would arise to be proportionate to that prevailing within this residential area.
11. The site is within a Critical Drainage Area and the relief of the land leads neighbouring properties potentially vulnerable to surface water runoff from the site. However, the appellant's Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) identifies that the appeal site is suitable to deal with surface water potentially through soakaways or ultimately via attenuated discharge into a public sewer. Although I note that the FRA relates to a previous scheme on the site, I have no reason to disagree with its findings as to the proposed drainage strategy. Whilst the site is within a Declared Air Quality Management Area, the impact from a single dwelling would be inconsequential in this regard.

¹ Pursuant to planning permission Ref PA18/10679

12. Edgcumbe Road is a busy thoroughfare, and I understand from the evidence that its incline can encourage speeds in excess of the speed limit. I am aware that there have been incidents elsewhere, although, the detailed circumstances of such have not been provided. I am also mindful of the expert advice of the highway authority, which issued no objection to the proposal. In my view, the minor relocation of the vehicular access and the modest intensification in its use through the addition of a single dwelling would not have an unacceptable effect on highway safety, beyond the existing, approved situation.
13. With regard to the need for the dwelling, St Austell is a location where the principle of new windfall residential development is supported by the CLP, the housing targets of which do not set a maximum limit. This is consistent with the government's intention to significantly boost the supply of housing.

Conditions

14. In addition to the standard time condition, I have imposed a plans condition in the interests of certainty. A condition is necessary to ensure that surface water is adequately drained from the site going forward. The outside space serving the dwelling is of sufficient size, even taking into account the potential for future extensions, and I find no exceptional justification to remove Permitted Development Rights for such.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons outlined above, and taking all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should succeed.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR