
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2020

by John Morrison BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L2630/W/19/3241768
4 Hillside Crescent, Wicklewood NR18 9QD

- 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 Mrs C Riches against the decision of South Norfolk District Council.
 - The application Ref 2019/0847, dated 11 April 2019, was refused by notice dated 5 June 2019.
 - The development proposed is a single storey dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. There are two main issues. These are a) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and b) whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for future and existing occupiers with specific regard to the provision of private garden space.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site is the rear garden to No 4 Hillside Crescent which itself is a detached rectangular bungalow with a gable roof. There is a single storey hipped roof extension to one side and a detached brick outbuilding used as a garage which is connected to the rear elevation of the bungalow by a matching wall. Hillside Crescent hosts mainly bungalows in similar sized rectangular plots that are developed in a single tier as frontage buildings set back from and facing the road. No 4 abuts a short cul de sac that also accesses a number of garages and dwellings between Hillside Crescent and High Street.
4. Whilst the proposed dwelling, in scale terms, would not be dramatically smaller than No 4, it would be sat in an uncharacteristically small plot when compared to its surroundings. It would also result in the plot size of No 4 being noticeably truncated. When taken together, the buildings would appear squeezed together and wholly against the established grain of development locally. I appreciate that some of the Hillside Crescent plots do have outbuildings, including the appeal site. Some of these buildings are of a

noticeable scale. They are however ancillary buildings to their host in each case and do not subdivide the curtilage they feature in.

5. As I have alluded to above, the immediate area is also characterised by frontage development. The addition of the proposed dwelling in this case would, despite taking its access from and presenting to the cul de sac rather than the main estate road, appear as an obvious back land plot and additional tier of development on Hillside Crescent. This would be something of an alien form in the context of the area's general layout.
6. For these reasons, the appeal scheme would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area which would be contrary to Policies DM3.5 and DM3.8 of the Local Plan¹. Amongst other things and with regard to this main issue, these policies seek to ensure that (with regard to additional dwellings on subdivided plots particularly) a given development incorporates a high quality design which maintains or enhances the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Living Conditions

7. The crux of the Council's case in regard to this main issue is how the appeal scheme would not provide for sufficient private garden space for either the new dwelling or the existing one. In this case, the proposed bungalow would have access to an area that would be an L shape, extending around its rear and side. In overall land take terms, I would be inclined to agree with the appellant that it would be sufficient, particularly given the area of the market the proposed new dwelling appears to be aimed at. However, its configuration gives me cause for concern. It would be narrow and its two component parts would be sandwiched between and in close proximity to both the side and rear walls of the dwelling and the plot's boundary. To my mind this would garner something of a hemmed in and oppressive experience for users.
8. In the case of No 4 Hillside Crescent, the amount of space remaining would be small, perhaps going as far as to say it would be on the limit of what would be acceptable. There would also be access to an area of space to the front of the building that the dwelling has double patio style doors opening onto. This would be slightly less private given it abuts the back edge of the road but when taken together the spaces would be sufficient for the purposes of the enjoyment of occupiers.
9. Be this as it may, this would not make up for the shortcomings for the proposed dwelling. The garden space provided would be sufficient in quantity terms but is found lacking qualitatively. For that reason, the proposed development would fail to provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers. Which accordingly would conflict with Policies DM3.5 and DM3.8 of the Local Plan. Amongst other things and in regard to this main issue, these policies seek to ensure (with regard to additional dwellings on subdivided plots in particular) a high standard of contextually appropriate design that provides adequate private amenity and utility space.

Other Matters

10. I acknowledge that this cul de sac part of Hillside Crescent also provides access to some High Street dwellings. However, it is not necessarily the point of

¹ South Norfolk Local Plan: Development Management Policies Document 2015

access that the new bungalow in this case would benefit from that causes me concern. In any case, the harms I have found would remain regardless.

11. I also note the appellant's comments concerning Wicklewood playing fields and children's play area being within a short walking distance of the appeal site. I remain to be convinced however that the accessibility of larger public play spaces would be sufficient alone to justify a dwelling where its own space (for which there is also an expectation for some to be private) was substandard.

Conclusion

12. There is some discussion in the evidence of both parties pertaining to the Council's current housing land supply position. If I were to take it that the Council were unable to demonstrate the supply of housing sites as required by the Framework², be taken to paragraph 11 and treat the most important policies accordingly I would ascribe some weight to the provision of a new dwelling but given it would be only one such weight thereto and its associated benefits would be limited. These factors would be stacked against the multiple harms that I have found to which I would ascribe substantial weight. I would therefore conclude that, in this particular case, the adverse impacts of granting a planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits.
13. With this and the above matters in mind, and taking into account the views of third parties, the appeal is dismissed.

John Morrison

INSPECTOR

² The National Planning Policy Framework 2019