
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2019 by John Gunn DipTP Dip DBE MRTPI

Decision by R C Kirby BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V0510/W/19/3236827

Site north east of 2 Croft Park Road, Littleport, Cambridgeshire CB6 1HZ

- 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 Martin Law against the decision of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00677/FUL, dated 09 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 04 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is a new two bed bungalow.
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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 issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the surrounding area resulting from the loss of green space; and
 - the effect of the proposal on parking provision within the area and its effect upon highway safety.

Reasons for the Recommendation

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal site lies in a residential area at a point where Croft Park Road and Hempfield Place meet which is characterised by short terraces of houses and bungalows, and semi-detached dwellings, set back from the highway with well defined 'building lines' to Croft Park Road and Hempfield Place.
5. The appeal site comprises a prominent area of open land to the front of No 2 Croft Park Road. It provides a visual break within the street and makes a

positive contribution to the character and appearance of this otherwise largely built up area.

6. The new bungalow would be sited close to the boundary with Croft Park Road and would be prominent in the street scene given this, and the alignment of the road. It would be positioned well forward of No 54 Hempfield Place resulting in a building that would be visually dominant within the streetscene, the harm of which would be exacerbated by the largely solid rear elevation, which would be particularly prominent from Hempfield Place. Moreover, the development of the appeal site with the proposed bungalow would significantly erode the open characteristics of the site.
7. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policy ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan April 2015 (LP) and Part 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework which jointly seek to promote high quality design that complements local distinctiveness, enhances public amenity and protects local character.

Car Parking Provision

8. Whilst the development of the appeal site would prevent it from being used as a car park for users of the bowls club to use, from the evidence before me it is apparent that the land is in private ownership. Although a 'Gentleman's Agreement' was entered into with the previous owners of the site to use it as an overflow car park, its use for this purpose cannot be depended on to provide parking provision in the future, particularly if the new owners prevent such a use from occurring.
9. On my site visit I observed that there was some on street parking within the vicinity of the appeal site. However, it appears that a number of properties in the area have off street car parking areas and I have no evidence before me to indicate that on-street parking within the area has reached saturation point, or has resulted in issues with highway safety. Accordingly, there is a high probability that users of the bowls club would be able to park safely within the highway close to the bowls club if the club car park was full, and the appeal site was not available for parking. The removal of the site for overflow car parking would be unlikely to result in harm to highway safety.
10. In terms of the new dwelling, 2 car parking spaces are proposed. Whilst the creation of a new drive into the appeal site would reduce the opportunity for on street parking, overall this would have only have a slight impact on the availability of parking in the cul-de-sac. It would be unlikely to result in harm to highway safety. It is noteworthy that the highway authority raised no objection to the proposal.
11. In the light of the above I conclude that the appeal proposal would not cause harm to highway safety. There would be no conflict with Policies COM7 and COM8 of the LP which seek to provide safe and convenient access to the highway network and provide adequate levels of car parking, amongst other matters.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. The proposal would make a small contribution to housing supply at a time when the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and would make use of a previously developed site, in a location close to services and facilities. These matters carry considerable weight in favour of the proposal. The absence of harm to highway safety is a neutral factor in this case because a well-designed development would be expected to achieve this. Against these benefits is the significant harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area in conflict with the development plan and national policy. I conclude that this harm significantly and demonstrably outweighs the benefits of the scheme. There are no other material considerations which lead me to determine the appeal otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Recommendation

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

J Gunn

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

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

RC Kirby

INSPECTOR