



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 July 2020

by R Norman BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/W/20/3252932

Swallows Rest, High Street, Docking PE31 8NH

- 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 J Cave, CW Cave Properties Ltd against the decision of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00201/F, dated 8 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is a dwelling following sub-division and alterations to donor dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Docking Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on High Street and comprises an attractive property and associated garden. The dwelling is set back into the site and comprises a traditional, two storey dwelling with a single storey side extension and outbuilding. The property is identified as an Important Unlisted Building within the Docking Conservation Area.
4. The Conservation Area extends along the main road through Docking and incorporates a large area of land to the South. The appeal site is located within the eastern part. Within this part of High Street, the appeal site and property make a positive contribution to the Conservation Area as a result of its age, traditional appearance and prominence. The set back of the dwelling provides some relief from the immediate prevailing built form of properties close to the pavement.
5. The addition of a second dwelling into the appeal site would result in two separate areas of garden for each property along with parking and a shared turning area. Due to the location of the existing property, the main gardens and outdoor areas would be to the front of the dwellings, adjacent to High Street. Although the proposed parking for each property has been relocated to the sides of the site, the shared turning area and driveways would still result in

- a substantial and dominant area of hard standing to the site frontage which would be prominent within the street scene.
6. Whilst the proposed gardens would be modest, they would provide a reasonable area of outdoor space for each property. However, they would not be of a size to sufficiently soften and mitigate the visual impact of the amount of hardstanding proposed. As a result, the development overall would have an urbanising effect and the site would appear over developed. This would result in the erosion of the gap in the built form currently experienced within the street scene which would be harmful to the historic character of the area and the integrity of the existing dwelling.
 7. The proposed dwelling would entail the removal of the existing single storey side elements. These are in a reasonably poor state of repair, the shed in particular. However, whilst the single storey structures do detract to a degree from the overall appearance of the property and surroundings, the provision of a new two storey dwelling in their place would significantly alter the character and appearance of the appeal site and surroundings to a harmful degree.
 8. For the above reasons I conclude that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Docking Conservation Area. It would therefore be harmful in this regard. This harm would be less than substantial and accordingly, in line with paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) (the Framework), should be weighed against the benefits of the proposed development.
 9. The Appellant has identified benefits that would arise from the proposal, namely benefits to the local facilities, contribution to a thriving rural community in line with the Planning Practice Guidance on rural housing, the removal of the buildings currently in poor condition and the provision of housing towards local and national targets. However, these benefits would be very limited due to the scale of the proposal, comprising one additional dwelling. Taken collectively, I therefore find that these benefits do not outweigh the less than substantial harm arising for the above reasons.
 10. Consequently, I find that the proposed development would fail to comply with Policies CS06, CS08 and CS12 of the King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council Local Development Framework Core Strategy (2011), Policy DM15 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) and part 16 of the Framework. Collectively, these seek to ensure that local character and a high-quality environment is maintained, ensure that new development preserves or enhances the historic environment and protects the heritage and cultural value of an area, amongst other things. It would also fail to accord with Section 16 of the Framework.

Other Matters

11. I note that the Conservation Officer did not provide comments on the application. However, the absence of an objection from statutory consultees does not, in itself, mean that the proposed development would be acceptable.
12. A local objection has been received concerning highway safety matters and the potential end use for the property. The end use is not a matter for me to consider and it is not necessary for me to conclude on matters of highway safety as this would not alter my overall findings.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, and having considered all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Norman

INSPECTOR