
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 August 2020

by M Heron BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/B1550/W/20/3249431

Camelia Lodge, High Street, Canewdon SS4 3PU

- 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 A Rybak against the decision of Rochford District Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01070/FUL, dated 19 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 January 2020.
 - The development proposed is a new detached dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a relatively narrow strip of garden land to the side, front and rear of Camelia Lodge. This is a single storey, link-detached property, located on the corner of Canewdon Hall Close towards St Nicholas Church. Whilst Canewdon has evolved over time and contains a mix of property types, Camelia Lodge is positioned at the end of a row of bungalows set along the northern side of this part of High Street. Although these bungalows vary in terms of their individual designs, they are set back from the street in wide plots. Such a layout gives them a sense of space and rhythm.
4. This proposal seeks permission to construct a detached, single storey dwelling. This would be a pitched roof, gable fronted, property to match some of the adjacent bungalows and would be sufficiently set back from High Street. Nevertheless, the scheme would add a significant amount of built development to the site, including a dwellinghouse and new off-street parking spaces. This would harmfully erode the spacious feel of Camelia Lodge's prominent corner plot. Moreover, given the restricted width of the appeal site, the proposed dwelling and its plot would be markedly narrower than adjacent bungalows and their plots. In this context, it would appear discordant within this part of the streetscene and unduly cramped upon its plot in relation to its size. This would reinforce the scheme's harmful overall impact.
5. Taking all of the above into account, notwithstanding the pre-application advice of the Council, I am not persuaded that the proposal would enhance the immediate area. On the contrary, it would fail to integrate effectively with its

character and appearance. The proposal's harmful impact would be apparent from the public domain and would not be mitigated by the use of appropriate materials.

6. For the reasons given, I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies DM1 and DM3 of the Local Development Framework Development Management Plan and Policies H1 and CP1 of the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Adopted Version. Amongst other things, these seek to ensure that developments are high quality in design, protect the character of settlements and contribute positively to the surrounding built environment.
7. Turning to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), this promotes the efficient use of land. However, this should not be at the expense of development which is sympathetic to local character and adds to the quality of areas. The proposal would not achieve this. There would therefore also be conflict with the design objectives of the Framework.

Other Material Considerations – Heritage Assets

8. The appeal site is close to the eastern boundary of the Canewdon Church Conservation Area (CA). The significance of this CA is derived from the historic interest of the listed St Nicholas Church and associated buildings. Its setting is derived from the surroundings in which it is experienced, which in this case is verdant. Residential development which bounds the CA also influences its setting.
9. The proposal would not result in the loss of trees at the site which are of significant amenity value to the area. Neither would it harm the important row of horse chestnut trees located nearby along High Street. In addition, there would be limited inter-visibility between the proposed dwelling and the historic church, which is already experienced in the context of some residential properties. Consequently, I am satisfied that the scheme would preserve the setting of the CA.
10. Furthermore, to the south west of the appeal site is Vicarage Cottage, which is a listed building. I have a duty to have special regard to preserving the setting of this designated heritage asset. The significance of Vicarage Cottage is derived from its association with the nearby church, as well as its historic fabric and interesting detailing. This asset is also experienced in a verdant context that is influenced by residential development. The nature of the proposal would not alter the context in which Vicarage Cottage is read. Neither would its scale and positioning inappropriately compete with this asset. I therefore find that the setting of Vicarage Cottage would be preserved.

Planning Balance

11. The Government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing. However, whilst in an accessible location, the development for a single additional dwelling at the site would make only a minimal contribution to the Council's housing stock. Similarly, the economic benefits associated with it would also be minimal. In this context, although there may be a need for two-bedroomed dwellings in the District, I give limited weight to these social and economic benefits.

12. I have found that the proposal would not harm nearby designated heritage assets. It would also be acceptable in other respects, such as highway safety. However, these are requirements of the development plan and are therefore neutral factors in the overall balance.
13. On the other hand, the scheme would harm the character and appearance of the immediate area. It would therefore fail to fulfil the environmental objective of sustainability within the Framework. This is a matter which attracts significant weight against the development.
14. Even if paragraph 11 d) of the Framework were to be engaged, the above factors lead me to conclude that the adverse effects of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits associated with one dwelling. Overall, the proposal conflicts with the development plan and there are no material considerations, including the advice of the Framework, which outweigh this conflict.

Conclusion

15. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Heron

INSPECTOR