



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 24 November 2020

by G Pannell BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17th December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/20/3255784

Home Meadows House, Top Street, Martlesham, Woodbridge, IP12 4RD

- 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 & Mrs Ellison against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/20/0631/FUL, dated 13 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 April 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing house and the building of a replacement dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the Council issued its decision it has adopted the East Suffolk Council – Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (LP). The policies in the LP supersede those referred to in the Council’s delegated report. It is incumbent upon me to base my decision upon the most up to date planning policy and this is what I have done. The appellant had an opportunity to address the change in policy through their appeal submissions.
3. The Council’s decision notice lists drawing Nos 001, 003 and 004A as the plans the Council based its decision on. However, the appellant has submitted drawing Nos 6173-001 (site plan), 6173-002 (proposed elevations and floor plans), 6173-003 (site block plan) and 004 (existing and proposed elevations) with their appeal. The latter does not appear to have amended the scheme but shows a comparison between the existing house and the proposed development. Drawing 004A has not been submitted. The Council have suggested that drawing 002 was superseded by 004A but I have seen nothing that confirms this. Despite requests, the appellant has not provided a copy of drawing No 004A and I am not clear what this shows. I have therefore dealt with the appeal on the basis of the drawings before me.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The site is located in the countryside, between the settlements of Martlesham and Woodbridge. The proposal would result in the replacement of the existing

- dwelling on the site, which is a two-storey dwelling located within a reasonable sized plot. The dwelling is set back from the frontage of the site which has the appearance of an open meadow.
6. Policy SCLP5.3 limits residential development outside of defined settlement boundaries except in certain circumstances, including the replacement of dwellings on a one to one basis where these are no more visually intrusive in the countryside than the building to be replaced.
 7. The appearance and scale of the development within Top Street, is of traditional dwellings of modest proportions. The existing dwelling, is distinctive within the street scene but due to its level of detachment and degree of set back, does not compete visually with the linear row of cottages which are on the opposite side of the road.
 8. The proposed dwelling would be sited on the footprint of the existing dwelling, but as a result of the increased size it would extend towards the road and therefore be more prominent when viewed from the road. The design and proportions of the dwelling, including its hipped roof and sash windows would result in a mock Georgian appearance and this is not a form and design which is characteristic of the wider area. As a result the proposed dwelling does not respond positively to the character and appearance of the area and would be more visually intrusive than the existing dwelling and as a result of its siting would compete with the cottages on the opposite side of the road.
 9. Whilst I have been provided with examples of other similar styles of dwellings, these are further along Top Street and beyond, which has a different character, with the linear dwellings being set along the footpath edge within an existing cluster. These do not lead me to consider that they are the correct approach for the appeal site.
 10. In addition, the site is identified within the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan (NP) as a 'Local Gap'. Policy MAR7 of the NP states that development within the gaps should demonstrate that they maintain and enhance the open character of the land and do not reduce the gap either individually or cumulatively.
 11. Whilst I accept that the development of the site with a single dwelling would still enable a gap to be maintained, as part of the frontage will remain undeveloped, I consider that the proposed siting of the dwelling would erode the importance of this gap which contributes positively to the open nature and rural character of the area. This would lead to an uncharacteristic interruption of this gap and lead to a built form and suburbanisation that would be at odds with the open quality of the area.
 12. I note the appellants' comments in relation to how the existing dwelling could be altered by utilising permitted development rights. However, this would restrict any extensions to the front of the dwelling and therefore it would be considerably less harmful than what would be achieved from the proposed development. I therefore give the extension of the existing dwelling only limited weight in my deliberations.
 13. For these reasons, therefore, the proposed development would introduce a discordant built form to the locality that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, it would conflict with policies SCLP5.3 and SCLP11.1 of the LP which seek to ensure locally distinctive

and high quality design which responds to the local character of the area and would not be more visually intrusive than the dwelling it replaces. It would also be contrary to policies MAR4 and MAR7 of the NP.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Pannell

INSPECTOR

