

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 2021

by Graeme Robbie BA(Hons) BPI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N2535/W/20/3260040

land at plot 10, Orford Close, Brookenby, Market Rasen LN8 6FA

Easting(x): 520621 Northing(y): 395096

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr G Roe against the decision of West Lindsey District Council.
 - The application Ref 141272, dated 26 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is outline planning application to erect 1no dwelling with all matters reserved.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The original planning application form referred to the development site address solely in terms of its grid reference. Subsequent documents, including the decision notice and appeal submissions, refer to it as plot 10 within Orford Close. I have used a combination of these in the development site address in the banner heading above.
3. The application was submitted in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration. In addition to the site location plans and existing site plan drawings submitted with the application, a 'proposed site plan' was also submitted. It is clear that the latter is illustrative as befits an outline planning application with all matters reserved and that is the basis upon which I have considered the application.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. Orford Close is a small and relatively recent residential cul-de-sac located between Swinhope Road and Dale View Road within the village of Brookenby. The existing housing is a mix of semi-detached houses and detached bungalows, the majority of which are frontage properties on Swinhope Road with three properties, and the appeal site, clustered around a small cul-de-sac turning head.
6. The appeal site is tucked away in the corner of the cul-de-sac, accessed between Nos. 9 and 11. Currently a somewhat unprepossessing prospect, the

site does offer a bit of breathing space between Nos. 9 and 11 when approaching on Orford Close, and also opens out slightly due to the tapering nature of its north-eastern corner. Nevertheless, it is not a spacious site and it lacks the depth of the adjacent plot at No.9 due to the presence of an electrical sub-station immediately to the rear of the site.

7. The appeal site is, as the appellant states, only glimpsed from Swinhope Road. However, the extent to which it is glimpsed from this aspect highlights the tight confines of the site. Although only indicative, the illustrative site plan shows how a dwelling, should it be laid out within the plot in the manner indicated, would fill the already limited space between Nos. 9 and 11 from this viewpoint.
8. The dwellings on Orford Close are not of a substantial scale, but the space about and between them is relatively limited. In terms of that which does exist, the appeal site is a significant contributor. When viewed from Swinhope Road, the effect of developing a dwelling within the appeal site would be to close off one of the few spaces between dwellings resulting in a cramped layout which would alter the character and setting of Orford Close.
9. Despite the substantial brick and timber-panel enclosure that marks the site's northern boundary with Dale View Road, it is nevertheless prominent within that streetscene, particularly so given the rising ground levels to north and northwest. Here, given the layout suggested on the illustrative site layout plans, a building would clearly be seen tight against the site's rear boundary and also that with Dale View Road. Indeed, given the nature of the site and relationship with Orford Close, it is difficult to imagine a dwelling or layout that would not result in a dwelling tight up to one or both of these boundaries whilst still respecting the layout of Orford Close. The proximity of the existing sub-station to the site's boundary further adds to the sense of excessive scale and erosion of openness which would result, and which would sit uncomfortably with the more spacious setting of Dale View Road and surrounding streets. The presence of the existing brick and timber panel fence would underline, rather than mitigate, the site's constraints and the incongruous effect of developing the appeal site.
10. The building shown on the illustrative proposed site plan shows how the appellant anticipates a dwelling could be accommodated within the site. However, for the reasons set out above, it does not persuade me that a dwelling could be accommodated in this general manner without harm to the character or appearance of Orford Close or the surrounding area as a consequence of its cramped setting and the constraints of the site. A smaller building may go some way to addressing these concerns by allowing greater spacing or an alternative layout and siting, but to pursue this course would be likely in turn to result in a scale and form of development at odds with the prevailing scale and form of Orford Close.
11. I accept that it is not uncommon for the side or gable elevations of houses to be sited close to plot boundaries allowing sufficient width for a path to provide access from front to rear. However, the illustrative plans suggest that such a layout would be likely within the appeal site on three sides of the proposed building and this proximity to the site boundaries, and also to the sub-station to the rear, would go beyond that which the appellant suggests is commonplace. From within the turning head of Orford Close, the spacing between a building and the existing property at No. 11 would provide a more

meaningful space across the widest part of the site. However, as this area would provide the property's only outdoor space it is likely that it would become congested with vehicles and other domestic paraphernalia which would undermine the openness that this area would otherwise contribute to the character and setting of Orford Close.

12. I accept too that the refusal reason does not specifically refer to the provision of outdoor amenity space. However, the indicative layout demonstrates that it would be difficult to site a dwelling within the site and still provide an appropriate amount of usable outdoor amenity space with any degree of privacy. As such, this underlines the cramped nature of the site and proposal. Together, these factors compound a pervading sense of cramped over-development suggested by the illustrative site plan. As a consequence it is difficult to see how an appropriate balance between the scale of any building relative to those around it, its position within the site and how it relates to those areas beyond the site, particularly the more open setting of Dale View Road, could be effectively or appropriately struck.
13. Thus, for the reasons set out, the proposal would fail to maintain or respond positively to the layout and setting of Orford Close or the area beyond the site on Dale View Road. The appeal scheme is therefore contrary to policies LP17 and LP26 of the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan (CLLP) which together seek to secure high quality forms of development which respond positively to local character and townscape. Although CLLP policy LP2 establishes the broad principle of residential development in medium villages such as Brookenby, and the proposed materials could be secured by condition to match those of other properties on Orford Close, the proposal would nevertheless fail to achieve the high quality form of design that contributes positively to local character and townscape sought by CLLP policies LP17 and LP26. I accept that the appeal site has previously been part of an approved development scheme but note that there are significant differences between the development plot previously and the current appeal scheme, not least of which is the heavily truncated extent of the current appeal site at the rear.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out, and having considered all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Graeme Robbie

INSPECTOR