



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 March 2021

by E Brownless BA (Hons) Solicitor (non-practising)

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Saturday, 08 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/D0515/W/20/3261915

Land adjacent to No 1 Otago Road, Whittlesey PE7 1YJ

- 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 Steve Fradley against the decision of Fenland District Council.
 - The application Ref: F/YR19/1075/F, dated 29 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 7 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a chalet bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Fenland District Council against Mr Steve Fradley. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is a parcel of land laid to grass that lies to the front of two recently constructed single storey dwellings, Nos 27 and 27A Drybread Road. Dwellings along Drybread Road are generally single storey properties within large plots that follow a broadly similar build line set back from the highway with generous sized gardens to their front. This contributes a pleasantly open and spacious character to the area which is complemented by wide grass verges and the open aspect of the junction with Otago Road where built form is set well back from the junction.
5. In contrast, dwellings along Otago Road start some way beyond the junction and are mainly arranged towards the front of their plots with smaller areas of front garden. Despite the presence of fencing around the appeal site which results in Nos 27 and 27A having considerably smaller areas of front garden than other dwellings along Drybread Road, they follow the common build line and appear as part of the row of dwellings fronting Drybread Road. As a result, the appeal site has considerably more affinity with the dwellings of Drybread Road. It makes a positive contribution to the open aspect of the junction and the overall open and spacious character of the area.
6. The proposed scheme has been revised in an attempt to overcome previous reasons for refusal, however, it would introduce a tandem form of development

- to the front of No 27A that would appear at odds with the prevailing pattern of linear development. Despite there being some examples of tandem development within the locality, including, to its side, No 1A Otago Road, these are not common and are uncharacteristic of the area.
7. Although a single storey dwelling and the use of a complementary palette of materials would correspond with some nearby dwellings, given the constrained size of the appeal site the resultant dwelling and its plot would be significantly smaller than other dwellings within the row. Taken together with an absence of a similar depth of frontage to the highway and its position forward of the common build line would result in a significant adverse effect that would erode the open aspect of the junction and the spacious and open character of the surrounding area.
 8. Given that the appeal site occupies a prominent position at the junction of Otago Road and on a right angle bend of the highway, the proposed dwelling would be readily visible from the road and from neighbouring dwellings from where it would be seen as a strident, dominant and incongruous addition within the streetscene.
 9. I am not persuaded that the proposed dwelling would be read alongside the dwellings of Otago Road, given that the appeal site's visual relationship with those dwellings is significantly reduced by the intervening distance, fencing and access driveway. This concurs with the view of the previous Inspector¹ and supports my own findings in this respect.
 10. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would have a significant adverse effect on the established pattern of development and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Therefore, the proposal would conflict with Policy LP16 of the Fenland Local Plan (2014) and Policy DM3 of the Delivering and Protecting High Quality Environments Supplementary Planning Document (2014). Among other things, these policies seek to ensure high quality development that responds to the character of the local built environment and settlement pattern. In addition, it would conflict with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which, among other things, requires developments to be well-designed and sympathetic to local character. Furthermore, it would be contrary to the principles of the National Design Guide (2019) which requires proposals to be well related to its local context, respond to existing local character and be appropriate in terms of building type and form.

Other Matters

11. I have considered the appellant's view that the proposal accords with the Framework insofar as it relates to development within a sustainable location and a contribution towards housing supply. These factors are not disputed by the Council. In addition, there are no identified concerns regarding drainage, flood risk, highway safety, the living conditions of neighbouring residents, heritage assets or biodiversity. The scheme would provide adequate refuse collection and parking provision. The appeal site is not located within the green belt. However, the absence of harm is a neutral matter that weighs neither for nor against a proposal.

¹ APP/D0515/W/18/3212048

12. The appellant states that the scheme would make use of vacant land and improve its condition. However, any such benefit would be very limited and in combination with support for the scheme, these matters do not justify the harm I have described above.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would conflict with policies of the development plan and there are no material considerations that justify a decision otherwise than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

E Brownless

INSPECTOR