
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2021

by Peter Mark Sturgess BSc (Hons), MBA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: Friday, 21 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/W/20/3264352

62 Salts Road, West Walton, Norfolk, PE14 7EJ

- 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 M Harris against the decision of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01125/O, dated 29 July 2020, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2020.
 - The development proposed is construction of proposed dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Harris against Kings Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Procedural Matter

3. The application was made in outline with all matters reserved apart from access. I therefore have treated the details of the design and layout of the proposed dwelling shown on plan No PP1000 Rev D as for indicative purposes only.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The site lies along Salts Road in between other dwellings with open countryside to the rear. Salts Road leads from the centre of West Walton into the countryside surrounding the village. It is of varied character with denser development generally lying closer to the centre of the village. It is the varied nature of the designs and styles of the houses along it, together with their spacing and relationship to the surrounding countryside which give the road its character.
6. In the part of Salts Road where the appeal site is located the houses on the south side are set back and have extensive rear and side gardens. This allows views from Salts Road into the open countryside beyond and gives the immediate surroundings of the appeal site a spacious, semi-rural character.

7. The appeal proposal would introduce a dwelling into a gap between two of the houses. This would reduce both the space which currently exists between the two dwellings and block the views of the open countryside from Salts Road. I acknowledge that there are other areas along Salts Road where the gap between dwellings is narrower than the appeal proposal and its neighbour. It is also clear that gaps have been reduced by the construction of out buildings and extensions in the area. However, it is this variety, the existence of large gardens and the clear relationship between the road and the open countryside brought about by the gaps which contribute to the character of the area which I have outlined above.
8. Furthermore, other dwellings in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site benefit from ample parking and manoeuvring areas, both to their fronts and their sides. It appears from the indicative layout supplied with the proposal that parking for the proposed dwelling would be concentrated at the front of the site. I acknowledge that this could be altered when the reserve matters are considered, should I be minded to allow the appeal. However, in its current indicative form the car parking would add to the sense that the site is cramped and too small for the proposed development through its location at the front of the site. This would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area.
9. I acknowledge that the rear garden would be of adequate width to serve the needs of the occupiers of the proposed dwelling. However, it still would not be as wide as that of the existing dwelling or its immediate neighbours. This would therefore not reflect the spacious character of existing gardens, thereby further harming the existing character and appearance of the area.
10. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) at paragraph 127 seeks, amongst other things, to ensure that developments are sympathetic to local character. A key aspect of local character I have identified is the importance of gaps between dwellings in the area of the appeal site in maintaining the semi-rural character of the area. The appeal proposal would not be sympathetic to this aspect of local character as it would reduce the gap between the dwellings thereby harming this aspect of the local character.
11. The development plan for the area includes the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, adopted in July 2011 (CS) and the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan, adopted in September 2016 (SADMPP). Policy CS 08 of the CS and Policy DM 15 of the SADMPP both seek high quality development in the District that responds to the context and character of their surroundings. Both policies expect new development to do this through their layout which should respond sensitively and sympathetically to amongst other things the local setting and spaces between buildings.
12. The appeal proposal is in conflict with these policies and the relevant provisions of the Framework, as it fails to respond sensitively and sympathetically to its surroundings by filling a gap which contributes to the open and semi-rural character thereby harming the existing character of the area.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has referred me to other developments which have been allowed on appeal. In particular the site at Nos 68 and 70 Salts Road. It appears to me that there were different considerations which were relevant to that case than the one that is before me. For example, the site was at the end of a line of

dwellings and therefore did not fill a gap between buildings. I am not convinced that the proposal before me and the appeal referred to are directly comparable. In any event I am required to determine this case on its own merits.

14. I note that the appellant has argued that the proposal would contribute to the vitality and viability of the village. However, given the modest scale of the proposal and its distance from the facilities in the village that contribution would be small. Therefore, it does not outweigh the harm it would cause to the character and appearance of the area which I have identified.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Peter Mark Sturgess

INSPECTOR