

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 May 2021

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/M2270/W/20/3262534

**Land west of Kingsmead Park, Church Road, Paddock Wood,
Tonbridge, Kent TN12 6HA**

- 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 Risby against the decision of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 20/01949/FULL, dated 11 July 2020 was refused by notice dated 14 September 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing garage and the erection of a detached bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The Council's objection to the proposal is that it would be a cramped development that would fail to integrate with the existing built environment. In respect of both these points, it is helpful to have regard to the OS map forming part of the composite application plan.
 4. This shows that the established residential area to the south and east of the recreation ground has a mixed character with a varied pattern of development including plots of all shapes and sizes. Many of the dwellings are semi-detached pairs, for example along both sides of Warrington Road in a linear arrangement, but also in a cluster in the cul-de-sac of Walnut Close. Other properties are in substantial terraces east of Kingsmead Park, whilst there are also detached houses with some in a recognisable pattern and others in apparently randomly located plots.
 5. Ostensibly, this mix of development could be argued in favour of the appeal scheme, but as I saw on my visit the site would adjoin the substantial sized garden of No. 27 St Andrews Road to the west and be positioned opposite perhaps the largest plot in the locality, in the form of Warrington Place Farm House on the south side of the lane.
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6. Bearing in mind this spacious setting and having regard to the small plot size (perhaps equivalent to one of the smaller semi-detached houses but with its triangular shape, far more heavily constrained), the proposed bungalow would appear incongruous and contrived. It would draw the eye as being a dwelling awkwardly squeezed in along the side of the access to the other dwellings. And with such a small and awkwardly shaped external area there would be little or no opportunity for landscaping or screening to help the bungalow offset the visual intrusion that it would represent and in the longer term blend into its surroundings.
7. I acknowledge, as does the Council in the planning officer's report, that the location is sustainable and that there is no objection in principle to infilling within this mixed residential area. Furthermore, the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing supply which favourably affects the approach to the planning decision. The proposed bungalow would also use a number of construction techniques to enhance its sustainability credentials.
8. However, even with these arguments in support of the scheme, the inadequacies and incongruities of both the plot and its actual siting would mean that the development would have an unacceptably adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. In my view this clearly outweighs the advantages of an additional dwelling.
9. In summary, the proposal would be in harmful conflict with Policy EN1 of the Council's 2006 Local Plan; Policy CP4 of the Council's 2010 Core Strategy, and also with Government policy in Section 12: 'Achieving Well-Designed Places' of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019.
10. For the reasons explained above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I dismiss the appeal.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR