



Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 25 May 2021 by Emma Worby BSc (Hons) MSc MRPTI

Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 June 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/F3545/D/21/3269540

34 Downham Way, Brandon, IP27 0UH

- 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 V Cruz against the decision of West Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/20/2056/HH, dated 23 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 31 December 2020.
 - The development proposed is a detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

4. The appeal site is occupied by a single storey detached dwelling, which is set back from the adjacent road by a large front garden. The dwelling forms part of a row of three similar properties along this section of Downham Way, Nos.34 and 36 Downham Way and 33 Beechfields. Whilst all have uncharacteristically large front gardens, the openness and spaciousness of these gardens nevertheless makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the area.
5. Due to the location of the proposed garage in the front garden of the appeal site, it would be highly visible within the public realm. Although existing hedges and trees may screen some of the proposal, it would still be partially visible when approaching from both the east and west. This visibility, along with the significant size of the proposed building, would result in a prominent addition to the streetscene, particularly as there is no existing built form in the front garden of the appeal site.
6. I observed that the dwelling at No.32 Downham Way is set forward of the row of three dwellings, however it is separated by a public footpath and is viewed independently to the setting of the appeal site. The proposed garage would therefore sit forward of the existing building line and would conflict with the pattern of development on this section of Downham Way. Its positioning and

the coverage of a large proportion of the front garden would also harm the existing open nature of the site to the detriment of the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

7. Although there is an existing garage/substation to the front of No.1 Downham Way, this is not a prevailing form of development in the area and therefore does not set any precedent for other similar types of development. Furthermore, it is noted that the existing garage on the site has little scope for extension due to the size of the garden and that a garage to the front may be the only option available to the appellant. However, whilst I have had regard to this, it would not outweigh the harm identified.
8. For the reasons above, I consider that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Therefore it would conflict with Policies DM2 and DM24 of the West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document (2015) and Policy CS5 of the Forest Heath Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2010). These policies ensure new development is designed to a high quality, does not adversely affect significant street patterns, and respects the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Other Matters

9. The Council and the appellant both indicate that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers and I find no reason to disagree with this. However, this lack of harm would be a neutral factor and would not overcome the harm found to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion and Recommendation

10. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

Emma Worby

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

11. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR