



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 November 2021

by P Eggleton BSc(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29TH November 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/J1915/W/21/3272754

52 and 54 Widford Road, Hunsdon, Hertfordshire SG12 8NW

- 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 M McNamee against the decision of East Herts Council.
 - The application Ref 3/20/2219/FUL, dated 10 November 2020, was refused by notice dated 9 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is a two bedroom bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two bedroom bungalow at 52 and 54 Widford Road, Hunsdon, Hertfordshire, in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 3/20/2219/FUL, dated 10 November 2020, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall be begun not later than 3 years beginning with the date of this permission.
 - 2) The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans date stamped 18 December 2020: Location Plan, Existing Rear Site Plan, Proposed Rear Site Plan, Roof Plan, Section Details, Floor Plan, East and West Elevations and North and South Elevations.
 - 3) Prior to any above ground construction works being commenced, details of the roof tiles and render colour of the bungalow shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) Details of all boundary treatments; soft and hard landscaping; and measures to enhance biodiversity, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details prior to the first occupation of the bungalow and shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details at all times thereafter; or with regard to soft landscaping works, these shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following first occupation. In the event that any tree or hedging plant dies or is removed within five years of first planting, it shall be replaced before the end of the first available planting season.
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5) The bungalow shall not be occupied until the parking spaces illustrated on the approved plans and an electric vehicle charging point, have been provided. These shall be maintained at all times thereafter for their intended use.

6) Prior to the first occupation of the bungalow hereby approved, the provision of a high-speed broadband internet connection shall be provided and shall be made available for use.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The proposal would result in a new bungalow within the combined rear sections of the rear gardens of 52 and 54 Widford Road. The property would be served by an existing service road which is the main access to a number of semi-detached properties immediately to the east. The dwelling would replace domestic buildings whilst retaining good sized rear gardens for the host dwellings.
4. The Council's concern is that the proposal would fail to reflect and promote local distinctiveness and would cause harm to the character and appearance of the site and the surrounding area. The site is visible from the service road that serves these and the existing properties to the east and it would improve the appearance of this area which currently accommodates domestic outbuildings. In any views from the north, across the adjacent field, the low height of the bungalow would ensure that it would have very limited prominence. In any event, it would retain the existing residential character. Whilst the settlement has a generally historic linear form, there are numerous exceptions to this. This proposal would not alter or detract from the existing form, character or appearance of this area or the village overall.
5. The Council make reference to policies of the East Herts District Plan 2018. Policy VILL1 identifies Hunsdon as a Group 1 Village where new residential development is permitted subject to the requirements set out in part VI of the policy. I have found no conflict with those specific requirements. Policy DES4 seeks high standards of design. The proposal would have a hipped roof which would reflect the detailing of neighbouring properties. The overall design would sit comfortably in this residential area. It would make good use of the site, be adaptable for a range of occupiers, provide adequately sized rooms, have space for bins in the good sized garden and it would have little impact on adjoining neighbours. These policies therefore generally support the proposal.
6. Concerns have been raised with regard to sewage and drainage issues; the suitability of the access and its ownership; and the potential for obstruction during construction works. Whilst these are matters that will need to be addressed by the developer, no objections have been raised by the Council or utility providers; and ownership matters, including the use of the access, are outside the scope of this appeal. The Parish Council has raised concerns with regard to the loss of garages and parking to the rear of the host dwellings but adequate off-road parking to the front of the dwellings is present and in use.

7. Overall, I find support for the principle of this development from the development plan and I have found no matters that weigh significantly against it. I therefore allow the appeal.
8. I have imposed conditions that refer to the timetable for commencement; and make reference to the approved plans, for the avoidance of doubt. I have also imposed conditions to control the external materials; and landscaping including boundary treatments, to ensure that the proposal has a satisfactory appearance. Within this condition, I have included the requirement to enhance biodiversity as the most appropriate measures may include landscape planting and/or the bird and bat boxes suggested by the Council. I have also required the provision of the parking spaces; an electric vehicle charging point and access to high-speed broadband, in order to ensure that the illustrated parking is provided so as not to impact on the use of the shared access; to encourage the use of a more sustainable fuel source; and to secure adequate connectivity. These conditions seek to address the requirements of Policies TRA3, CC1 and DES4; and the aspirations of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Peter Eggleton

INSPECTOR