



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 July 2022

by Luke Simpson BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F3545/W/21/3287225

Land adjacent Flint House, The Park, Great Barton IP31 2SU

- 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 C O'Neill against the decision of West Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/1241/FUL, dated 7 June 2021, was refused by notice dated 3 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is Erection of dwelling with attached garage.
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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 appeal site comprises an area of maintained grassland which is located close to Flint House, which is a two-storey residential property of traditional design. The site is well screened to the west by mature planting but is visible from the neighbouring property to the south and from Flint House to the north. The site is located within an area referred to as 'The Park', which is identified in the Great Barton Neighbourhood Plan¹ as a 'special character area'.
4. Flint House is set within a relatively spacious plot and it is only separated from the appeal site by a relatively low flint wall. As such, the site currently appears to be visually associated with this dwelling. The appellants' statement of case indicates that the land could be returned to use as a garden, yet the planning application form describes the existing use as a 'domestic garden'. Either way, in terms of appearance the appeal site makes a positive contribution to the spacious context of Flint House.
5. Indeed, this spacious and verdant character is a defining feature of the surrounding area and in particular The Park, which predominantly comprises of larger detached dwellings set within spacious plots. Whilst there are many consistent design characteristics within the Park, there is variation in the scale and appearance of properties.
6. The proposed development is a 1.5 storey dwelling which would have a similar footprint to other dwellings within the surrounding area, including Flint House. Despite this comparison, the proposed development would occupy a far smaller

¹ Great Barton Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2041 (Made June 2021)

plot than neighbouring properties. As a result, not only would it harmfully erode the spacious character of Flint House, but it would stand out as an incongruent feature of the surrounding area, given the cramped layout of the development. This visual harm would be clearly apparent from several vantage points, including over the existing access and from Flint House and the neighbouring dwelling to the south.

7. The removal of a small section of flint wall and some of the existing planting to the west would further diminish the verdant character of the surrounding area. However, I do not consider that there is a realistic prospect of additional pressure being applied for the removal of other trees and vegetation. Indeed, this could be controlled by planning condition in any event.
8. The fact that the site does not comprise public land is not a consideration which reduces the aforementioned harm. Indeed, the appeal site does make a valuable contribution to the spacious and verdant character of the surrounding area, regardless of ownership.
9. The appellants have suggested that permitted development rights could allow for domestic outbuildings and structures on the appeal site. However, I consider it unlikely that any such development would be materially less harmful than the appeal proposals, given the large footprint of the proposed development within a relatively constrained site. In any case, no specific details have been provided to indicate what other development might be capable of realistically coming forwards on the site in this regard. As such, this matter does not outweigh my findings.
10. For these reasons, the proposed development would have a harmful visual impact on the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Development Management² Policies DM2 and DM13, Core Strategy³ Policy CS3 and Neighbourhood Plan Policies GB10 and GB12. Together these policies seek to ensure that new development respects local character and distinctiveness, including landscape features and in particular (in the case of GB10) the character of 'The Park Special Character Area'.
11. There would be some social and economic benefits associated with the increase in the housing stock and the temporary support for construction jobs. However, given that only one dwelling is proposed these benefits would be modest and would not outweigh the aforementioned harm.

Conclusion

12. The proposed development would be contrary to the development plan taken as a whole. There are no other material considerations of sufficient weight which warrant a decision other than in accordance with the development plan. As such, the appeal is dismissed

Luke Simpson

INSPECTOR

² West Suffolk Joint Development Management Policies Document (Feb 2015)

³ Forest Heath Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document 2001-2026 (May 2010)

