

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 August 2022

by J Bell-Williamson MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th September 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/22/3296713

Aldston, Mill Hill, Aldringham Cum Thorpe IP16 4PZ

- 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 Adrian Smith against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/0127/FUL, dated 12 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2022.
 - The development proposed is front and first floor extension of existing chalet bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed extensions on the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached bungalow in a residential cul-de-sac of mixed property types.
 4. Policy SCLP11.1 of the East Suffolk (Suffolk Coastal) Local Plan (2020), concerning design quality, says that development proposals will be permitted where they respond to local context and the form of surrounding buildings in relation to a number of criteria. These include that the overall scale and character should clearly demonstrate consideration of the development as a whole in relation to its surroundings; and that the height and massing of developments should be well related to that of their surroundings.
 5. Mill Hill includes varied property types with both bungalows and examples of two storey dwellings on the opposite side of the road to the appeal property and to the north. However, Aldston is in the middle of a row of some five detached bungalows of similar scale and design laid out on a staggered building line on land that slopes away from the road. As such, this row of similar dwellings provides this part of the street scene with a good degree of uniformity of character and appearance.
 6. The most significant changes resulting from the proposed extension would be the greater roof height and the additional massing to the front from the gable
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feature. While not unattractive, the existing bungalow has little architectural merit in its own right and the drawings show that the proposed extensions would result in a proportionate dwelling. As such, despite the material changes involved the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the existing dwelling's character and appearance.

7. Despite this, the dwelling is not seen in isolation and forms part of a uniform group of largely unaltered dwellings, which reflect the original planned design and layout of this part of Mill Hill. The changes proposed would have a significant effect on this uniformity by creating a taller, bulkier building that would not bear any visual relationship to the dwellings either side. As such, the appearance of the altered dwelling would be incongruous, harmfully upsetting the character and appearance of this part of the street scene. While bungalows and larger dwellings exist side-by-side in the surrounding area, the effects of this juxtaposition is not comparable to the changes in the middle of the uniform group of bungalows that would result from the appeal proposal.
8. The appellant draws attention to permitted development rights that could enable an additional storey to be constructed¹. However, as the Council notes, the exercise of such rights require prior approval, including with regard to the effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, I give this matter limited weight as a fallback position for the appeal proposal.
9. Accordingly, for these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would have an unacceptably harmful effect on the character and appearance of the street scene. As such, it is contrary to Policy SCLP11.1 of the East Suffolk (Suffolk Coastal) Local Plan, as described above. It is also contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework, which promotes good design. Policy SCLP10.4 of the Local Plan, concerning landscape character, is less directly relevant to the proposal in my reading of it.

Other Matters

10. I have had regard to the representations made by interested parties, both in support of and objecting to the proposal. There are no additional matters raised that would lead me to reach a different overall conclusion.
11. I acknowledge that the appellant may be frustrated by the process leading to the Council's decision in this case. However, this matter is not within the scope of this appeal, which concerns the planning merits of the proposal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should not succeed.

J Bell-Williamson

INSPECTOR

¹ The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2020.