



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 12 July 2022

by Stephen Wilkinson BA BPI DIP LA MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 October 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/C1570/W/21/3289634

Pond Mead, High Street, Widdington, CB11 3SB

- 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 A Knowles against the decision of Uttlesford District Council.
 - The application Ref UTT/20/1344/FULL, dated 5 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 November 2021.
 - The development proposed is the construction of 2No. new detached dwellings and associated works following demolition of the existing building.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Adrian Knowles against Uttlesford District Council. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Main Issue

3. I consider the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, with particular regard to the Widdington Conservation Area (WCA).

Reasons

4. Pond Mead comprises a large two storey detached property dating from the mid nineteenth century although its core may be older. The WCA appraisal (2013) references the importance of walls to the character of the WCA and in particular references the high brick wall along the frontage of Pond Mead. There is no specific reference included in the appraisal to the contribution of the house to the character and appearance of the WCA.
5. Pond Mead includes important features including gables which dominate its principal elevations, a tiled roof and varied fenestration. Pond Mead is one of several large buildings within the WCA which contrast with those located around the Green which are of more intimate scale and character. This adds to the variety of built form within the WCA contributing to its sense of place.
6. The proposed scheme involves the redevelopment of Pond Mead to provide two detached 2 storey dwellings. From the Design and Access Statement the plan form of the two buildings has been designed to replicate that of the existing building although their combined footprint is larger. Montages included in the appellant's evidence comparing the existing building and the proposed scheme

- demonstrate how it would appear similar in form when viewed on the approach to the site from the north with gables facing to the north and the road.
7. The design of each dwelling incorporates features drawn from Pond Mead. These include central excluded gables with a tudor style step, gable pitches, chimneys and projecting bays. Elevations would be completed of facing brick, render and timber boarding with plain tiled roofs.
 8. Each dwelling would be served by their different access points from the High Street. This has been accepted in previous schemes by the Council. The scheme would also involve the rebuilding of the brick wall along the site's frontage.
 9. The scheme reflects changes from an application which was refused in 2021¹ which proposed two detached dwellings of 2.5 storeys covering broadly the same area of the site as the appeal scheme. These dwellings would have had greater depth and height than the current scheme. The appeal scheme reflects the appellant's response to this refusal by broadly adhering to the massing of the existing building but seeking to avoid the Council's concerns over the elevational treatment which it considered were a 'pastiche Georgian design'.
 10. However, the existing building due to its size, orientation and design has a strong presence in the streetscene, effectively marking the entrance to the WCA. Although the original building has been extended these extensions do not undermine its qualities which contribute to the WCA. Its varied fenestration, elevational treatment and roof tiling represent vernacular features which make a positive contribution to the streetscene and in turn to the WCA.
 11. Despite the attention to detail included in the proposed scheme, two modern detached properties would not make the same contribution to the character and appearance of the WCA. The site's location contrasts with that of the recently completed dwellings on a neighbouring site, which due to their set back from the road, have less impact on the character and appearance of the WCA at this point.
 12. I acknowledge the appellant's reference to the previous permission for the conversion of the building into 2 flats and whilst his statement refers to this being unviable, the full report is not before me and accordingly I cannot make a detailed assessment of its findings. I acknowledge the appellants comments in respect of a condition survey of Pond Mead but this is also not before me.
 13. The Development Plan comprises the Uttlesford Local Plan 2005. Policy ENV1 requires that development preserves and enhances the character of Conservation Areas and that buildings which contribute to that character should be protected. Furthermore, Policy GEN 2 includes a range of design criteria which require that new development is compatible with its surroundings through its scale, form, appearance, layout and materials.
 14. The loss of Pond Mead would undermine the character and appearance of the WCA. The two dwellings due to their prominence would not preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the WCA. For these reasons, I conclude that the appeal scheme conflicts with Policies GEN2 and ENV1.

¹ UTT/20/0313/FUL

15. Finally, the proposed scheme would create one additional dwelling. In itself this is only a small contribution to the Council's housing supply and whilst I recognise this would be a public benefit it is insufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm that would arise from the loss of the existing building.
16. For these reasons, the appeal is dismissed.

Stephen Wilkinson

INSPECTOR