



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 November 2022

by S Crossen BA (Hons) PgCert PgDip MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 19 December 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/F3545/W/22/3300795

land adjacent to 1 Oak Drive, Beck Row IP28 8UA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Joe White against the decision of West Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/21/2181/OUT, dated 2 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 February 2022.
 - The development proposed is the erection of one dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application was made in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration. I have therefore taken any indication of reserved matters shown on the submitted drawings to be illustrative. The submitted plans include a proposed site layout and site perspective showing a chalet bungalow. Whilst these are not marked as being indicative/illustrative, it is clear from the appellant's statement of case that they were submitted on that basis, and I determine the appeal accordingly

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the appeal site is a suitable location for a dwelling having regard to the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of the garden area of a detached corner bungalow positioned between two roads. The bungalow is the last in a row of three similar detached bungalows which have front and rear gardens. The opposite corner comprises the large front garden to a detached house, with a shared driveway serving it and a second detached house. Both prominent corner plots include large open areas predominantly devoid of development with soft landscaping and both contribute to the spacious, open character and appearance of the area.
5. To the rear of the appeal site is a detached bungalow fronting onto Holmsey Green, built closer to that road than the existing bungalow at 1 Oak Drive. A relationship is repeated on the opposite corner where the second detached house has a front projecting garage close Holmsey Green. This existing relationship between buildings forms a symmetry, with development set away from the road junction.

6. The indicative plans show that the appeal site is smaller than neighbouring plots and that any dwelling would need to be modest in scale in order to fit within the appeal site boundary. However, regardless of its siting, scale, appearance, or potential for landscaping any new dwelling would be visible. This would result in a loss of symmetry and of the open and spacious sense of place at a prominent corner, which would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. This would still be the case if the particular siting of the dwelling would maintain established building lines.
7. My attention has been drawn by the appellant to three examples of recently approved dwellings which are described as being like the proposal, particularly in respect of plot size and the amount of amenity space proposed. I have been provided with the approved site plans for these proposals and was able to understand the context of these sites in relation to the appeal site during my site visit. Whilst I have considered these examples, based on the evidence, none appear to be directly comparable to the proposal before me, with only one appearing to relate to a corner plot, albeit a different layout. I therefore attach limited weight to them and in any event, I must consider the proposal before me on its own merits.
8. I therefore conclude that the appeal site is not a suitable location for a dwelling having regard to the character and appearance of the area. The proposal is contrary to policies DM2 and DM22 of the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Local Plan Joint Development Management Policies Document February 2015 and Policy CS5 of the Forest Heath Local Development Framework, Core Strategy Development Plan Document, 2001-2026 (with housing projected to 2031) adopted May 2010. These policies seek, amongst other things, new development to provide good design that is sustainable and appropriate to its location, scale and function.

Other Matters

9. I note the appellants comments about the merits of the scheme including, efficient layout, accessible location, density, drainage, neutral effect on neighbouring living conditions, noise mitigation, and provision of garden space. However, and notwithstanding that the Council does not object to the principle of a new dwelling in this location, any benefits arising from the provision of an additional dwelling does not outweigh the harm identified above. Moreover, the fact that no objections were raised by interested parties and that the proposal is acceptable in respect of other issues, including the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, is not a reason to grant planning permission for development that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, having had regard to the development plan as a whole along with all other relevant material considerations, including the Framework, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Crossen

INSPECTOR