



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 March 2023

by A Berry MTCP (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/22/3306824

Land and verges at St Martin's Green, Trimley St Martin, Suffolk IP11 0UZ

- 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 Adam Farnsworth against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/2427/FUL, dated 16 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 9 August 2022.
 - The development is a proposed garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Applications for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mr Adam Farnsworth against East Suffolk Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Crowswell Court comprises a cul-de-sac which forms part of a larger housing development. Along the northern side of the road and around the turning head are two-storey dwellings that are set back from the road by front gardens predominantly devoid of boundary treatments. Along the southern side of the road are two off-street parking areas set behind a grass verge that contains a small number of trees and plants. The parking areas each contain two double garages with pitched roofs and surface parking arranged around a central access/turning area. The parking areas are bound by brick walls which partially screen the garages and parked cars from the street. The lack of boundary treatments to the dwellings' front gardens together with the grass verge create a pleasing and open character to the street. Furthermore, the grass verge visually separates the parking areas from the street, enhancing its character and appearance.
5. The appeal site comprises part of the grass verge opposite 2 and 4 Crowswell Court. It is proposed to erect a detached single storey garage immediately adjacent to one of the existing garages within the off-street parking area closest to the turning head. The garage would have a similar height, depth and materials as the existing garages, but it would have a greater width. Access into the garage would require the demolition of the adjacent brick wall.

6. The proposed garage would infill a corner between two blocks of garages, however, the existing garages are not sited parallel to the road. Therefore, the proposed garage would project beyond the existing garages and would not be viewed against the backdrop of the existing garages when travelling along the road. I acknowledge that a brick wall abuts the back edge of part of the pavement along this side of the road, however the proposed development would have a greater scale and massing and therefore would be more visually prominent.
7. The grass verge may not be defined as public open space and is in private ownership. However, this does not negate my findings that the grass verge creates an open and pleasing character to the street. Even if the appeal site could be enclosed with a fence or a wall as permitted development¹, this would not be comparable to the much greater height and scale of the proposed development. I acknowledge that the proposal would not occupy the whole of the grass verge, however, its siting and scale would erode the openness and character of the street to a significant degree.
8. In reference to the main issue, the proposed development would cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policy SCLP 11.1 of the East Suffolk Council Suffolk Coastal Local Plan, adopted 2020 which, amongst other things, seeks to support high quality design that clearly demonstrates an understanding of the key features of local character and seeks to enhance these features through innovative and creative means. It would also be contrary to chapter 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework that seeks to achieve well designed places.

Other Matters

9. The proposed development could be used for the parking of one vehicle, which could result in one less vehicle parked on the highway. However, no parking survey has been provided to demonstrate that the surrounding area experiences pressure for car parking spaces.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above, the proposed development would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision other than in accordance with it. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

A Berry

INSPECTOR

¹ Class A, Part 2, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as amended.