

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2023

by N McGurk BSc (Hons) MCD MBA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 May 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/D/22/3313863

33 Park Drive, Worlingham, Suffolk, NR34 7DL

- 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 Martin Cunningham against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/3644/FUL, dated 13 September 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 November 2022.
 - The development proposed is a "footpath crossing."
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of the proposed development is taken from the application form. The Council's decision notice describes the development proposed as an "extension to existing dropped kerb and associated extension/alterations to parking bay."
3. Planning permission was previously granted for an extension to the appeal property¹. The Council notes that this previous permission approved a site layout plan for "the provision of two additional car parking spaces, immediately adjacent to the driveway, in the centre of the site frontage."
4. The Council goes on to state that the proposal the subject of this appeal "includes the raising of land within the site frontage (to highway level) all the way over the eastern boundary, secured by a retaining wall around the entire parking areas and accessed by steps to the rear."
5. The appellant and the Council have different views in respect of what was permitted by the previous permission. In this regard, I am mindful that there are no approved detailed plans before me to demonstrate that all of the works referred to above (in addition to the proposed extension to the dropped kerb) benefit from planning permission.
6. During my site visit, I observed that works associated with this appeal appear to have commenced. However, as the works are not complete, I refer to the "proposed development" in the decision below.

¹ Reference: DC/21/3749/FUL.

Main Issue

7. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

8. The appeal property appears as an extended detached bungalow situated along Park Drive in a residential area.
9. Park Drive in this location is characterised by an attractive sense of uniformity, derived in part from the long row of detached bungalows set on the same side of the street as the appeal property. Dwellings on this side of the road tend to be set back a similar distance, behind attractive front gardens and parking areas served by small single driveways.
10. The bungalows themselves sit lower than road level, with driveways and gardens sloping gently down towards dwellings and/or garages.
11. The bungalows have longer gardens to the rear which appear to back onto woodland and this, combined with the presence of front gardens, adds a significant sense of greenery and spaciousness to the area's attractive uniformity.
12. Dwellings on the opposite side of Park Road, which tend to comprise a range of detached and semi-detached single and two storey dwellings, present a different pattern of development at a higher level, albeit they too are set back from the road behind gardens and parking areas.
13. The proposed development would result in a long length of dropped kerb to enable access onto a raised parking area. As noted above, works associated with the raised parking area have advanced.
14. During my site visit, I observed that whilst many of the bungalows along the same side of Park Drive as the appeal property have been extended and/or altered, frontages tend to retain modest points of vehicular access via short, narrow driveways. Further, most frontages to bungalows retain garden areas and/or planting and make a positive contribution to the area's identified qualities.
15. In the light of this, the creation of a long length of dropped kerb and a raised parking platform across the majority of the appeal property's frontage would result in the proposal drawing attention to itself as a highly incongruous development. The proposal would appear awkward and out of keeping with the more uniform rhythm of development found along this side of Park Drive.
16. Further to the above, the proposal would result in what would appear as an entirely car parking-dominated frontage. This would be at odds with the softer, greener, landscaped arrangements which make a positive contribution to the character of Park Drive. As such, the proposed development would relate poorly to and appear stark within, its surroundings. This would be to the detriment of the area's identified attributes.
17. Taking all of the above into account, I find that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the National

Planning Policy Framework and to East Suffolk Waveney Local Plan (2019) Policy WLP8.29, which together amongst other things, seek to protect local character.

Other Matters

18. I am sympathetic to the appellant's circumstances and note the appellant's view that the proposed development would result in a more convenient parking solution. However, this is not a factor that outweighs the significant harm identified above.

19. The Council's reasons for refusal include a reference to the lack of detailed information in respect of the proposed parking area. This part of the Council's reasons for the refusal of the registered and determined application does not refer to national or local planning policy and appears somewhat vague. However, notwithstanding this, I have found that the proposal would result in significant harm to local character and hence the conclusion below.

Conclusion

20. For the reasons given above, the appeal does not succeed.

N McGurk

INSPECTOR