



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 June 2023

by M Russell BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 30 June 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/V2635/W/22/3308762

15 Feltwell Road, Methwold Hythe, Norfolk IP26 4QJ

- 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 & Mrs Davies against the decision of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/00404/F, dated 18 February 2022, was refused by notice dated 18 May 2022.
 - The development proposed is described as 'Construction of new bungalow type dwelling'.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Council's Appeal Questionnaire confirms that the site is in or adjacent to or likely to affect a SSSI. There is no reason for refusal in relation to this matter. In dealing with a recent appeal relating to a proposal for one dwelling at No 15 Feltwell Road¹ (the previous appeal), the Inspector in that instance noted the location of the site within the Impact Risk Zone for the Breckland Forest SSSI. In that instance, the Secretary of State considered the application under the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (EIA) Regulations 2017 and concluded that the development was not EIA development. Given the similarities in terms of the location and quantum of proposed development it has not been necessary to seek a further screening response and this issue has therefore had no further bearing on my assessment of this appeal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The side of Feltwell Road where the appeal is located is characterised by frontage development comprising of two-storey dwellings and bungalows. The dwellings to the north of the appeal site are set back further from the street than those to the south. Even so, there is general consistency in terms of plot depths, the frontage position of the dwellings and the presence of the open countryside beyond most of the rear boundaries which is often appreciable from the road, including in views through the gap between the dwellings at

¹ Appeal ref APP/V2635/W/21/3266885

Nos 15 and 9 Feltwell Road. In the vicinity of the appeal site, as Feltwell Road extends away from the village, this forms part of a distinct ribbon development pattern.

5. Where outbuildings exist within rear gardens, such as to the neighbouring properties at Nos 9 and 17 Feltwell Road, their modest scale and the degree to which they are screened by their host dwellings and boundary treatments gives them a discreet, subservient appearance in the street scene. Overall, the layout and density of development to this side of Feltwell Hill provides for an overriding spacious, semi-rural character.
6. There is no dispute between the parties that the site is situated within one of the 'Smaller Villages and Hamlets' as designated in the development plan. Policy DM 3 of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) (DMPP) confirms that in such locations the sensitive infilling of small gaps within a continuously built-up frontage will be permitted where it is appropriate to the scale and character of the group of buildings and its surroundings; and where it will not fill a gap which provides a positive contribution to the street scene.
7. The bungalow would be set significantly back from the building lines of neighbouring dwellings and close to the rear boundary with the neighbouring fields. The proposal would also curtail the plot at No 15 Feltwell Road such that it would no longer be consistent with the depth of neighbouring plots. In views through the gap between the dwellings at Nos 15 and 9 Feltwell Road this would appear at odds with the established development pattern to this side of Feltwell Road. The considerable amount of hard surfacing proposed for the access drive and parking requirements arising from the development would add to the intensive appearance of the development relative to the immediate surroundings, compounding the harm identified.
8. I note that the Inspector that dealt with the previous appeal also found that the siting of a dwelling further to the rear would result in a development which would jar with the existing character of development on this side of Feltwell Road. For the reasons set out, I agree and find that this would also be the case with the existing proposal.
9. I conclude, the proposal would not constitute sensitive infilling and would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. In that regard, it would conflict with the design, context and character requirements in Policies DM 3 (Development in the Smaller Villages and Hamlets) and DM 15 (Environment, Design and Amenity) of the DMPP and Policies CS06 (Development in Rural Areas) and CS08 (Sustainable Development) of the King's Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council Core Strategy (2011). For the same reasons, the proposal would also conflict with the local character requirements at Paragraphs 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

Conclusion

10. The proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area and would therefore conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no other material considerations in this instance which indicate that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan.

11. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

M Russell

INSPECTOR