



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 August 2023

by G Pannell BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/22/3310083

Terracotta Easton Lane, Hacheston, WOODBRIDGE, IP13 0DX

- 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 Thames River Homes Ltd against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref DC/22/2701/FUL, dated 7 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 8 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of 2 dwellings including detached garages. Form new access to Easton Lane.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues in this appeal are the effect of the development on:
 - character and appearance of the area; and
 - the residential amenity of Terracotta.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The village of Hacheston has a strongly defined linear character with dwellings predominately fronting onto The Street, B1116 which forms the main spine road through the village, with Easton Lane being one of only a few roads coming off this main route. A sporadic linear form of development continues along Easton Lane, within an area characterised by a range of dwelling types.
4. The exception to this is a small group of dwellings accessed off The Street, identified from the road as The Old Forge, which is close to the entrance to Easton Lane. It is located to the rear of the existing properties in The Street and has been cited by the appellant as justifying the appeal proposal. However, I have been provided with only limited details of this development and the characteristics of each site are different and the circumstances that applied to other cases may not be directly comparable to the appeal proposal.

5. The appeal site comprises land to the rear and side of Terracotta, a single storey detached dwelling which sits to the rear of dwellings fronting the B1116, but has a frontage onto Easton Lane albeit it is partially screened by existing landscaping. The site has the benefit of planning permission for the erection of a new dwelling to the side, with a new access formed onto Easton Lane¹. At the time of my visit the access had been created albeit informally and the site subdivided from Terracotta.
6. The appeal proposal is for two dwellings, with the first (dwelling A) fronting Easton Lane, located in a similar position to that previously approved. The second dwelling (dwelling B) would be sited behind the existing dwelling, served by a narrow access and would lead to a development at odds with the general pattern of development. This would result in an urbanising affect which would be both out of character and harmful to the overall appearance of the area.
7. Furthermore, the proposal will result in a dwelling to the rear of the existing properties in both Easton Lane and The Street, which is at odds with the prevailing pattern of development in the immediate area and would result in development that fails to take opportunities for improving the character and quality of the area.
8. For these reasons, therefore, the proposed development would introduce a discordant built form to the locality that would be out of keeping with and harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The tandem form of development would be contrary to policy SCLP5.7 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan 2020 (LP) which permits infill residential development within existing gardens where the scale and design would not result in harm to the street scene or character of the area.

Living Conditions

9. The access would need to run along the boundary of Terracotta and dwelling A. The result of the tandem development proposed is the need for the vehicles to pass close to the side elevation of the neighbouring property and the private amenity space of both properties. The additional noise and disturbance resulting from the increased traffic movements would be harmful to the living conditions of both Terracotta and dwelling A.
10. I consider that noise from cars accessing, turning and manoeuvring within the site and utilising the proposed access road, whilst modest, given its potential proximity would be detrimental to living conditions of neighbouring properties.
11. It has also been put to me, in terms of the impact on Terracotta, that the movements associated with dwelling B would be similar to that of the extant planning permission for dwelling A. However, the previously approved layout would not provide an access along the entire boundary and amenity space, as the parking area is located to the front of dwelling A and only a small area of driveway is adjacent to the side boundary of Terracotta. Therefore the impact would not be the same as that proposed.

¹ DC/21/3339/FUL

12. I conclude that the increased use of the new driveway would add unacceptably to the noise and disturbance likely to be experienced by the occupants of Terracotta and dwelling A, contrary to policy SCLP11.2 of the LP which seeks to protect all existing and future occupiers from an unacceptable loss of amenity in terms of noise and disturbance.

Other matters

13. The proposal would result in benefits, including the provision of an additional dwelling on a small housing site which could be delivered relatively quickly. It would also contribute to the local economy. However, these benefits are on a modest scale and do not outweigh the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area, or the living conditions.
14. The appeal site falls within a 'Zone of influence' for several European designated sites. Natural England has provided advice regarding the need to ensure that new residential development and any associated recreational disturbance impacts on European designated sites are compliant with the Habitats Regulations.
15. As the competent decision making authority, if I had been minded to allow the appeal it would have been necessary for me to complete an Appropriate Assessment for this scheme. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I have not taken the matter further.

Conclusion

16. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Pannell

INSPECTOR