



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 February 2024

by J Pearce MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18th March 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/V0510/W/23/3330425

30 Camel Road, Littleport, Ely, Cambs CB6 1PU

- 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 Francis Property and Development LTD against the decision of East Cambridgeshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 23/00022/FUL, dated 9 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 3 April 2023.
 - The development proposed is a proposed dwelling adjacent to 30 Camel Road, Littleport.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - whether the proposal would provide suitable living conditions for future occupants, with regard to external amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises a detached single-storey dwelling, and includes its associated garden and hardstanding. Development typically fronts Camel Road and is varied in scale and design. The dwellings within Camel Road are generously spaced and, with the open space to the opposite side of Camel Road, the street scene has a spacious character. While development at New Road is visible from the front of the site between the existing dwellings, it is set back from Camel Road and does not form part of the street scene. The grain of development, including the dwelling adjacent to No 32 New Road, is more tightly developed than that of Camel Road. Consequently, it has a different character.
4. The proposal is for the erection of a two-storey dwelling between No 30 Camel Road (No 30) and No 30a Camel Road (No 30a). The dwelling would be positioned adjacent to the boundary with No 30a and would be close to No 30. The limited spacing between the neighbouring dwellings would result in the proposal appearing unduly cramped within the separated row of dwellings. Furthermore, the narrow width of the dwelling would jar with the wider

dwelling on either side and would emphasise the limited size of the plot. The development would substantially fill the gap in built form, harming the overall spacious character of Camel Road.

5. The East Cambridgeshire District Council Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2012) (SPD) indicates that in most cases, building plots should be approximately 300 square metres. There is no dispute that the plot size is 193 square metres, which is significantly less than the figure within the SPD. However, the wording within the SPD indicates that this figure is not definitive and other developments in the locality referred to by the appellant, including at Washington Close, Old School Road and New Road may not achieve the plot size advised by the SPD. Nevertheless, while the figure within the SPD may not be definitive, the cramped appearance of the development would be symptomatic of the limited size of the plot.
6. I have had regard to development at No 36 and No 38 Camel Road. Although I have limited details in respect of the history of this development, I note that these dwellings are separated from neighbouring development on either side. Consequently, the spacing between properties, which characterises the area, is retained. Similarly, the outline planning permission under reference 22/00192/OUT includes a layout which would retain the spacing between the proposed dwellings and the existing development on either side. In any event, each proposal should be considered on its individual merits and with appropriate regard to the development plan and any material considerations, which is what I have done in this case.
7. I conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. The development would therefore conflict with Policies ENV1 and ENV2 of the East Cambridgeshire Local Plan (2015) (ECLP) and the SPD, which collectively require proposals to create positive, complimentary relationships with existing development and will refuse design which fails to have regard to local context.

Living conditions

8. The dwelling would have an enclosed rear garden, adjacent to the parking area. Policy ENV2 of the ECLP requires proposals to have regard to the SPD. The SPD requires that, in most cases, rear private amenity space should be a minimum of 50 square metres. The SPD does not set fixed standards for private amenity space and that the application of the guidance contained within the SPD should not be rigidly applied.
9. The appellant indicates that the space to the rear of the dwelling would comprise an area of at least 43 square metres. Whilst this is below the figure within the SPD, the garden would be adjacent to the rear of the dwelling and would have a reasonable and usable layout. Consequently, the proposal would provide a satisfactory private amenity space for future occupants of the dwelling.
10. I conclude that the proposal would provide suitable living conditions for future occupants of the dwelling. The development would therefore accord with Policy ENV2 of the ECLP, which seeks to ensure that all development is designed to a high quality and that occupiers of new dwellings, enjoy high standards of amenity.

Other Matters

11. The proposal would make a positive contribution to housing supply within walking and cycling distance of services and facilities with associated social and economic benefits during the period of construction and once the dwelling is occupied. However, the contribution of one dwelling in an urban area and the associated benefits, including the potential for downsizing, are limited by the scale of the development proposed and would not outweigh the harm that I have identified.
12. The appellant has indicated that the site of the proposed dwelling is surplus to requirements and could become unkempt and overgrown in the event that the appeal is dismissed. There is no substantive evidence before me to suggest that the land would not be maintained given its use as a garden. However, the land is enclosed by a close boarded fence and forms the garden of an existing dwelling. Therefore, even if the land were to become unkempt, this would have a limited visual effect on the area given the enclosed nature of this part of the site.

Conclusion

13. The proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole. The other considerations in this case do not indicate a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Pearce

INSPECTOR