



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 August 2025

by **David Smith BA(Hons) DMS MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13th August 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/J2210/W/25/3364379

14 The Bridge Approach, Whitstable, CT5 1RA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Richard Nicholl against the decision of Canterbury City Council.
 - The application Ref is CA/24/02073.
 - The development proposed is a new detached two-bed bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a new detached two-bed bungalow at 14 The Bridge Approach, Whitstable, CT5 1RA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref CA/24/02073, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing nos WBH 0440.1 and WBH0440.3.
 - 3) No development above slab level shall take place until details of the external materials for the construction of the dwelling hereby permitted have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.
 - 4) Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the area shown on drawing no WBH0440.1 for the parking and manoeuvring of vehicles shall be provided. That area shall thereafter be retained for that purpose.
 - 5) Prior to the first occupation of the dwelling hereby permitted, the bike store shown on drawing no WBH0440.1 shall be provided and thereafter retained for that purpose.

Main Issue

2. This is the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The Bridge Approach is a sloping road with residential properties along it. The northern side is mixed with a block of flats, a pair of semi-detached houses and chalet bungalows. On the southern side, which includes the appeal site, is a coherent line of bungalows of similar design and size. The proposal would be aligned with the existing buildings and positioned between Nos 14 and 16.

4. Policy DBE3 of the Canterbury District Local Plan sets out principles of design. These seek to promote, protect and enhance the distinctive character, diversity and quality of the District through high quality design which reinforces and contributes positively to its local context. To achieve this, regard should be had to several listed considerations including the form and density of development. The National Planning Policy Framework aims to achieve well-designed and beautiful places.
5. The site area (293 sq m) would not be the smallest in the road but would be below the majority of the plot sizes on the southern side. However, this factor alone is not determinative. Furthermore, neither the Council's decision to allow two infill dwellings at Fitzroy Road nor the appeal decision (Ref: APP/J2210/W/15/3134894) in Cromwell Road set principles regarding spacing or subsidiary development that must be followed in this case. Rather the proposal should be considered as a whole against the relevant development plan policy.
6. According to the Council, the proposed dwelling would be about 0.9m and 1.2m from the respective side boundaries. This is not inconsistent with the gaps between existing bungalows which are close to one another in places. Therefore, the proposal would not appear cramped. However, the width of the building plot and of the proposed infill dwelling would be less than that prevailing along the street frontage. On the other hand, its scale would be subservient to No 14 and the design of the front elevation would closely emulate No 16 with a projecting front gable and a main hipped roof. Suitable materials could be secured by condition.
7. Therefore, the form, height and footprint would be similar to nearby buildings and there would be no conflict with the detailed factors listed at criterion e) of Policy DBE3. Whilst the proposal would not exactly replicate the existing pattern of development along The Bridge Approach, it would respect and reinforce the local context by adding another suitably designed, single story building to the existing row. The overall visual effect would be harmonious rather than discordant. The character and appearance of the surrounding area would not be harmed and there would be no conflict with the overall aims of Policy DBE3.

Other Matters

8. The site is within the zone of influence of the Thames, Medway and Swale Estuaries and Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay Special Protection Areas (SPAs). In combination with other development in Canterbury and by adding to the resident population, the proposal has the potential to create recreational disturbance on the over-wintering bird populations in those areas. There would therefore be a likely significant effect on the SPAs.
9. Policy SP6 of the Local Plan explains that in these circumstances new developments are expected to fund management and monitoring measures to mitigate these impacts. The appellant has provided a signed and dated unilateral undertaking which includes a covenant to pay the requisite Strategic Access Management and Monitoring contribution. As a consequence, any harmful impacts would be avoided.
10. Therefore, following an appropriate assessment, the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of the SPAs and would comply with Policy SP6 and also Local Plan Policy LB5 which protects sites of international conservation importance.

11. The obligation also includes a clause that occupation would be limited to the appellant for three years and that he will have had an input into the design and layout of the development. The Council is satisfied that the exemption for self-build and custom build development from the biodiversity net gain condition required by Schedule 7A of the Act is met. A biodiversity gain plan is therefore not required.

Conditions

12. In the interests of certainty, the approved plan should be specified. To safeguard the appearance of the area external materials should be agreed in advance. The front parking area should be laid out so that the development functions properly. To promote sustainable transport the bike store indicated should be provided. The existing parking area is loose gravel. No compelling highway safety reason has been put forward as to why a 5m deep bound surface should be insisted upon.

Conclusion

13. The proposal accords with the development plan and there are no material considerations to the contrary. Therefore, for the reasons given, the proposed dwelling is acceptable and the appeal should be allowed.

David Smith

INSPECTOR