



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 October 2025

by **L Fern BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 4th December 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/X3540/W/25/3369243

2 Clare Avenue, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 4ES

- 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 Squirrell against the decision of East Suffolk Council.
 - The application Ref is DC/25/0735/FUL.
 - The development proposed is erection of self-build detached bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and
 - the effect of the proposed development on the living conditions of the occupants of 2 Clare Avenue (No 2) regarding noise, and disturbance from light, from vehicular movements.

Reasons

3. Policy SCLP5.7 of the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan (2020) (the LP) supports proposals for residential development within existing gardens, only where they meet specific requirements, which are set out at criteria a) to e). Criteria a) requires proposals to be of a scale, design and materials that would not result in harm to the street scene or character of the area. Criteria c) requires proposed development, amongst other things, to ensure it would not be significantly harmful to the residential amenity of the occupants of existing dwellings.
4. In addition, LP Policy SCLP11.1, amongst other things, supports locally distinctive and high-quality design that clearly demonstrates an understanding of the key features of local character and the built environment. Furthermore, LP Policy SCLP11.2 states that the Council will have regard to noise and disturbance when considering the impact of development on residential amenity.
5. The appeal site comprises some of the garden space to the rear of 2 and 4 Clare Avenue (Nos 2 and 4 respectively). Most of the properties along Clare Avenue and Old Barrack Road, in the vicinity of the appeal site, have a regimented highway fronting building line and benefit from substantially long gardens, which help to define and characterise the spaciousness of the area. These features set the

immediate area apart from the more sporadic and dense cul-de-sac development to the rear, such as Churchill Close.

6. The proposed bungalow would be accessed off Clare Avenue via the existing driveway to No 2.

Character and appearance

7. The introduction of a dwelling within rear garden space in a location that benefits from a particularly regimented highway fronting-built form, and that is largely devoid of similar backland development, would fail to assimilate itself with its surroundings.
8. Although set back, the proposed dwelling would be noticeable from Clare Avenue and be apparent within the street scene due to the large gap between the dwelling at No 2 and the adjacent bungalow and its garage. Furthermore, it would be a prominent built feature when viewed from neighbouring two-storey properties, such as those on Clare Avenue and Old Barrack Road. The proposal would disrupt the flow of the largely open and spacious gardens that assist in defining the character of the surroundings.
9. Furthermore, the single storey design, whilst reducing its prominence in terms of height, would result in a dwelling of a larger footprint than most in the immediate vicinity. Thus, the property would encompass a significant amount of what is currently a largely undeveloped garden space, thereby exacerbating its effect on the character of the area.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to a recent appeal decision¹ at 17 California, Woodbridge (No 17), which allowed a proposal for the erection of a single storey dwelling on land to the rear of the existing property. Whilst there are clear parallels that can be drawn with this appeal, particularly in terms of its backland location, its surrounding context is notably different. I observed on my site visit that the land to the rear of No 17 is in a more secluded position that is not as prominent and visible from neighbouring properties. It is therefore not wholly comparable to the appeal site, which is more open in aspect and can be readily observed from numerous properties along Old Barrack Road as well as Clare Avenue.
11. For the above reasons, I find significant harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to LP Policies SCLP5.7 and SCLP11.1.

Living conditions

12. Although future residents would drive past the existing property and rear garden area of No 2, the proposal is for a single dwelling, and it is therefore anticipated that the number of vehicle movements along the driveway would be minimal and of a domestic nature in terms of frequency and speed. Furthermore, the light emitting from car headlights would only be observed fleetingly from the neighbouring garden as vehicles passed No 2, and the associated limited effect would be reduced significantly by the presence of the existing substantial close boarded fence.
13. Concern has been raised regarding the existing loose gravel material used to construct the drive, which, if replicated across the length of the proposed access, could cause additional noise disturbance for neighbouring residents. If I was

¹ PINS Ref APP/X3540/W/24/3350645.

mind to allow the appeal, I could have explored imposing a condition requiring the use of a more appropriate surfacing material.

14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would not have an unacceptable effect on the living conditions of the occupants of No 2 regarding noise, and disturbance from light, from vehicular movements. Consequently, the proposed development would comply with LP Policies SCLP5.7 and SCLP11.2, which, amongst other things, supports development that would not give rise to significant harm to the residential amenity of the occupants of existing dwellings.

Other Matters

15. The appellant claims that paragraph 11 d) (ii) of the National Planning Policy Framework would be engaged in this instance due to Policy SCLP12.1 being silent on 'infill' and 'backland' development, thereby rendering the development plan out-of-date. However, the referenced policy is not before me. Furthermore, there would need to be an absence of policy relating to the supply of housing, which is what is proposed in this case, not simply an absence of consideration of 'infill' and 'backland' development.
16. The proposed development would provide an additional dwelling, which would contribute towards the Council's housing supply. However, the Council states that they are currently able to demonstrate a healthy 6.08-year supply of deliverable housing sites, which is not disputed by the appellant. It would also contribute to the supply of self-build houses and there would be likely economic benefits from the construction of the dwelling and associated spend of future occupants in the local economy. Nevertheless, as there is no means before me of securing the self-build status of the proposal and the scheme is only for a single dwelling, I therefore attribute only limited weight to these benefits.

Conclusion

17. The proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole, and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L Fern

INSPECTOR