



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 June 2013

by **G J Rollings BA(Hons) MAUD MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 6 September 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/Q0505/A/13/2193997
29-31 Harding Way, Cambridge, CB4 3RW

- 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 Mrs Susan Baggaley against the decision of Cambridge City Council.
 - The application Ref 12/0856/FUL, dated 5 July 2012, was refused by notice dated 28 November 2012.
 - The development proposed is a terrace of four town houses to replace existing semi-detached bungalows and garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I have used the site address as given on the appeal form and Council's decision notice, as this provides an accurate description of the site.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character of the street scene.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. Harding Way is a residential street containing several housing types within two distinct character areas. The appeal site and the area to the immediate west comprise detached and semi-detached bungalows. To the east, the character of the street changes, to incorporate detached and semi-detached two-storey houses, and one small block of flats, Probus House. The appeal site is located on the corner of a short cul-de-sac, which gives access to a parking area at the rear.
5. The appeal site is located where the two areas meet, and the bungalows currently on the site appear as part of the character area to the west. These dwellings are attractive within this context and contribute to this character. The proposed development would involve demolition of the bungalows and replacement with four 2-storey terraced houses. This would introduce a new housing type to the street, but I do not consider that this, by itself, would cause harm. The houses would have rear gardens which are smaller than those of the surrounding houses, but I do not consider that this would be sufficient to make

the proposal appear cramped on the site. In these circumstances I do not consider that the principle of the development is unacceptable.

6. The appearance of the dwellings would be distinctly modern, although some design cues would be taken from surrounding development, such as the materials and the proposed front-facing gables. The overall appearance would be relatively simple and plain, but the 2-storey forward projections, which would contain only small window and door openings, would appear unduly bulky.
7. Many of the buildings in the street have a symmetrical pattern, although some of these have been altered through extensions. The proposed design would adopt some of this symmetry. However, the pitched roof over the single-storey element on the western side of the building, which appears to be intended as a response to the adjacent bungalow, appears contrived. In my view, the result is a building which would be unbalanced and clumsy alongside the plain gable and pitched roof of the adjacent bungalow. It would appear as an incongruous element in the street scene.
8. The development would also result in the loss of other features which contribute to the character of the street, such as trees and front boundary planting, although this could be remedied with a suitable landscaping plan. Nonetheless, because of the massing and design of the proposed building, the development would have a negative impact on the street scene. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a detrimental effect on the character of the street scene. It would not comply with Local Plan¹ Policies 3/4 and 3/12, which state that development will be permitted when it responds positively to existing features of local character, and where it can be demonstrated that the development would have a positive impact on its setting, among other factors.

Other issues

9. The appellant pointed out examples where other new development has occurred within a suburban context. I am not fully aware of the circumstances under which these were allowed and due to the differing site surroundings, do not consider them to be directly relevant to this appeal. In any case, I have considered this appeal on its own merits.
10. I note that within its Committee Report, the Council sought a planning obligation for the development. However, the absence of an obligation was not given as a reason for refusal. In any case, submission of an obligation as part of the appeal would not have overcome or negated my concerns regarding the harm caused to the character and appearance of the area, for the reasons given above.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters before me, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G J Rollings

INSPECTOR

¹ Cambridge City Council Local Plan 2006.