

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 September 2016

by H Butcher BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29 September 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/W/16/3150242

Manor Park Cottages, Salisbury Road, Hampshire, Shipton Bellinger, SP9 7UX

- 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 Mr & Mrs I Greenland against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/02063/FULLN, dated 24 August 2015, was refused by notice dated 24 March 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of 3 No dwellings, creation of new access and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Amendments were made prior to determination of the application which included additional planting and the removal of a detached garage/carport. No party would be prejudiced by my determining the appeal on the basis of the amended application.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
4. A second issue, being whether a contribution should be made towards affordable housing, appears to have fallen away. The Council have set out that, in light of recent changes in Government policy on the specific circumstances where contributions for affordable housing should not be sought, they are no longer pursuing the second reason for refusal.

Reasons

5. Manor Park Cottages are a pair of traditional brick and flint cottages which sit side on to Salisbury Road at the edge of the village of Shipton Bellinger. The cottages are currently the first visible built form seen when travelling north along Salisbury Road. As you travel north more development, fronting onto Salisbury Road, becomes apparent, and, in general, plot sizes incrementally reduce with properties moving closer together and towards the highway.
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6. Manor Park Cottages currently occupy particularly spacious plots with generous gaps to the side boundaries and wide and long rear gardens to the south. The gardens, although not classified as open countryside, but rather falling within the settlement boundary of Shipton Bellinger, are, nevertheless, largely clear of any built form, beyond that of modest domestic and ancillary type buildings. As such they provide an open and green space at the outskirts of the village. The spacious nature of Manor Park Cottages is commensurate with their edge of village location and provides a transition between the village and the surrounding open countryside.
7. The proposal is to erect three dwellings at the end of the rear gardens to Manor Park Cottages. These would have a similar orientation to Manor Park Cottages sitting side on to the highway. However, unlike Manor Park Cottages, they would fill a much larger proportion of the width of the site and would sit markedly closer to the side boundaries. They would also occupy significantly smaller plots; and the plots to Manor Park Cottages would also be greatly reduced. Overall this would create the impression of a more cramped and dense form of development in this edge of village location. The 2m gap between the pair of semi-detached properties and the detached property proposed would do little to alleviate this, particularly as these would be two storey and gable ended, thereby creating a nearly continuous block of development across the site.
8. Between the proposed dwellings and Manor Park Cottages would be a communal area of parking. Such a parking layout is generally associated with higher density developments. More spacious developments generally allow for off-road parking within the curtilages of each property. This arrangement would therefore also add to the dense and urban appearance of the proposal. Although I note amendments to use bodpave (grass) terram and to include additional planting around this area it would still have the appearance of a communal parking area.
9. For the above reasons the proposal would be at odds with the existing pattern of development in this location. As described above, plots become progressively larger and more spacious towards the edge of the village where it meets the open countryside here, which provides a suitable transition between the two. However, the proposal would appear as a higher density development more akin to a central village location, which would abruptly end at the settlement boundary. Any subtle transition would be lost. As such the development would jar with its semi-rural location. I accept that the parking area would allow views from Salisbury Road across to the open countryside beyond. However, the immediate view would be of a parking area and three tightly packed dwellings which would be harmful given its setting.
10. I note that the existing hedgerow around the site is to be largely retained and enhanced, and that the site slopes away from the highway. Even taking these matters into account, the development, at two storeys, and in such close proximity to the boundary with the road, would still be clearly visible. Whilst national space standards might be exceeded, and the density calculated by the appellant at some 26 dwellings per hectare might be low generally, the National Planning Policy Framework sets out that planning should take account of the different roles and character of different areas. Such standards and calculations do not take account of such matters.

11. The proposal would therefore be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and as such would conflict with Policies E1 and E2 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan (2016). These policies seek high quality design which integrates with, respects and complements the character of the area in which it is located.

Other Matters

12. The proposal would create three additional homes which would add to local housing supply. There would also be other modest social and economic benefits from the development, for instance, it would support local services in the area, and, in the short-term, would provide employment during the construction period. However, even taking these benefits together, they would not outweigh the conflict I have found with the development plan.
13. The appellant refers to an appeal decision (ref APP/C1760/W/15/3131717) which allowed a development of five dwellings outside of the settlement boundary of North Baddesley. I have limited information before me in respect of this, such as plans or the full circumstances surrounding this decision, therefore I am unable to draw any meaningful comparisons. Nevertheless, the appeal before me largely concerns the immediate context to the appeal site, which this appeal does not form a part. As such I can only afford this decision limited weight.
14. Whilst a section 106 agreement to secure financial contributions towards highway network improvements and off-site public open space provision has been provided, it is not necessary for me to consider this given that the proposal is unacceptable for other reasons. In any event, the Council has reviewed its position in respect of the need for such contributions and would no longer be seeking these.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons set out above the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such it would conflict with the development plan and would not constitute sustainable development. Therefore, having had regard to all matters raised, including the use of traditional building materials, the appeal is dismissed.

Hayley Butcher

INSPECTOR