
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 October 2016

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

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

Decision date: 31 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/16/3151087

9 The Close, Monk Sherborne, Hampshire RG26 5HT

- 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 S R Hall Ltd against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/04221/FUL, dated 27 November 2015, was refused by notice dated 2 February 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single-storey dwelling with detached single garage, associated parking and driveway and new vehicular access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since it issued its decision, the Council has adopted the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2011-2029, which replaces the policies referred to in the Council's decision. Both parties have provided representations regarding the proposal and the decision in the light of the policies of the new Local Plan, and I have taken these into account in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

3. The Council has withdrawn its second reason for refusal. Therefore the main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The Council's concerns are focused on the siting, size and design of the proposal in relation to the character and pattern of development of the area, in particular the back to back distances between houses.
 5. My impression of the area is that while the area to the west of this part of Kiln Lane is rural in character, with agricultural fields and hedgerows, the close-boarded fence along the east of the Lane and the sight of dwellings behind it presents a different character. In this context, the formation of an access and driveway through the grass verge would not be out of character.
 6. Notwithstanding this however, the back gardens behind the bungalows 7, 8 and 9 The Close provide a substantial undeveloped area which supports the semi-rural tissue of this part of the village, at the interface between buildings and the open countryside. Much of their ground appeared to me to be higher than Kiln
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Lane. The proposed dwelling would diminish the semi-rural character of this part of Kiln Lane and The Close, and introduce a development with a footprint:plot ratio uncharacteristically high, and out of place in this distinctive, bucolic setting. The footprint of the proposed house would be longer than half the length of the terrace of Nos 7, 8 and 9, which would make it appear disproportionately larger than the houses in whose back gardens it would stand. In the context of the spacious plot character of the neighbouring development, the comparative lack of space around the proposed house would appear at odds, and relatively cramped.

7. The proposal would undermine the characteristic pattern of housing in the area by introducing an intensified development which would result in a footprint:plot ratio for both the new house, and for the houses whose gardens it would occupy, far higher than the surroundings. Its prominence on the ground above Kiln Lane and its reduced area of useable garden relative to the surrounding plots, would exacerbate the effect of its uncharacteristic siting to the back of Nos 7, 8 and 9, which would make it appear as a cramped form of development.
8. I appreciate that the proposed house would be single-storey which would reduce the impact over a two-storey proposal. I acknowledge too the benefit of the planting of a hedge along the street boundary, in place of the present fence. However, these positive factors do not outweigh the harm identified above.
9. The proposal would therefore be contrary to Policy EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan 2016 which says that development should contribute to local distinctiveness and have due regard to the density, scale and layout of the surrounding area and the relationship to neighbouring buildings. It would conflict with the advice in the Framework¹ which sets out that developments should respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings. It would fail to accord with the Planning Practice Guidance² which advises that development should seek to promote character in townscape and landscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development.

Other Matters

10. The views of local residents and the Parish Council have been taken into consideration and I have already dealt with what I regard as the main planning issue. I note the concern over impact on the living conditions of surrounding occupiers, however there is no evidence to reject the proposal on this basis.

Conclusion

11. Whilst the development would provide a modest benefit of one additional house to local housing supply, this is outweighed by the unacceptable harm it would cause to the character and appearance of the area, which is in clear conflict with the policies of the development plan. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR

¹ National Planning Policy Framework 2012, paragraph 58

² Planning Practice Guidance, DCLG 2014 as amended, paragraph:007, ID 26-007-20140306