
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 January 2017

by B Bowker Mplan MRTPI

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

Decision date: 15 March 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/V3120/W/16/3160655
20 Cumnor Hill, Oxford OX2 9HA

- 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 Millen Homes Ltd against the decision of Vale of White Horse District Council.
 - The application Ref P16/V1703/FUL, dated 12 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is detached dwelling with garaging.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Preliminary Matter

3. The Council adopted its Local Plan 2031 Part 1: Strategic Sites and Policies (LP) development plan on 14 December 2016. Consequently comments were sought from the parties regarding the effect of this matter on the appeal. The appeal has been determined taking into account the LP and the related responses.

Reasons

4. The proposed dwelling would be sited within part of the curtilages of Nos 18 and 20 Cumnor Hill. Cumnor Hill is predominantly residential in use and is characterised by dwellings set in long linear plots which gives the surrounding area a spacious character. The long rear garden of No 20 makes an important contribution to this spacious character.
5. During my site visit, I saw the two approved dwellings under construction at the adjacent site. In comparison with the appeal proposal, the two dwellings are set further away from properties along Cumnor Hill and are closer to semi-detached properties at Martin Close. I acknowledge that the previous nearby appeal¹ at Nos 12-14 involved development of a higher density. However, I agree with the Inspector that two dwellings to the rear of No 18 would be seen as a continuation of properties at Martin Close.

¹ APP/V3120/W/15/3137670

6. In contrast, the appeal proposal would be sited amongst properties at Cumnor Hill where a spacious character prevails. Irrespective of the appellant's low density figure, the proposal would result in No 20's garden being considerably shorter than adjoining gardens at Cumnor Hill. Despite the traditional design and roof form chosen, the proposed scale, footprint, mass and small plot size would harm the surrounding spacious character.
7. The resultant loss of spaciousness would be noticeable from adjoining garden areas, public vantage points between Nos 20-22 Cumnor Hill and from within the site itself. Existing and proposed landscaping around the dwelling would not replicate the site's current and valuable contribution to the spacious character at Cumnor Hill.
8. Therefore I conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Consequently, the proposal would be contrary to LP Policies CP4 and CP37 which are of most relevance to this matter. Combined, these policies require development to be of a high quality design that responds positively to the site and its surroundings. The proposal would also be contrary to the purpose of the Council's Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document which seeks to deliver high quality and well-designed buildings that are in keeping with their environment.

Other matters

9. The appellant states that the Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing land. However, since this contention was made, the Council have adopted its LP. Consequently I have no reason to question the Council's ability to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land.
10. Even if I were to conclude there is a shortfall in 5 year supply as suggested by the appellant and that relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up-to-date, the adverse impacts of granting permission identified above would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits arising from the proposal, benefits which include the proposal's support to construction employment and contribution of an energy efficient house to housing supply.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons set out above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

B Bowker

INSPECTOR