

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 April 2017

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: 16 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/17/3167969

Oakside, 1 Heath Road, Pamber Heath, Tadley, Hampshire RG26 3DR

- 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 Frank Redmile against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02909/FUL, dated 8 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is to erect a replacement dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the street scene and on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The site of the appeal is one of two corner plots at one of the ends of Heath Road which loops off and returns to Church Road and serves two cul-de-sacs. While the houses in Heath Road display some minor roof development and extensions they are characterised by being detached bungalows with pitched main roofs and hipped, projecting front bays. They share a consistent plot arrangement being set back from the verge-lined street by planted front gardens enclosed by low hedges, fences, or walls.
 4. Along Church Road, the flanks and frontages of the houses which face onto it share a generally consistent building line, providing a buffer between the buildings and the street. The opposite corner of Heath Road contains 2-storey houses which are set obliquely to the corner, and the housing along Church Road contains both bungalows and 2-storey housing.
 5. One of the core planning principles of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) is that planning should take account of the different roles and character of different areas. Sharing the distinctive architectural and townscape characteristics described above, the existing bungalow clearly reads as part of the development of similar bungalows along Heath Road, as distinct from the 2-storey houses which are more common along Church Road.
 6. In this context, the wide footprint of the proposed house would project substantially beyond the consistent building line of its neighbours in Church
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Road disrupting the pattern of development along the street and the character of its enclosure. Because of the width of the proposed house and the extent of accommodation at first floor level, the height and width of its roof would appear far greater than the neighbouring bungalows in Heath Road.

7. I have taken into account the 2-storey houses on the opposite corner of Heath Road and along Church Road. While the height of the proposal would not appear out of place in the context of the houses along Church Road, it has direct bearing on the character of development in Heath Road, in which context its height would be incompatible. I understand that the footprint of the proposed house is only marginally larger than the existing, however, the harm I have identified above results from the combined effect of the proposal's width and height, which would dominate the more modestly scaled bungalows.
8. The design of the proposal has been carefully considered to try to alleviate the tensions identified above, with the raised eaves concentrated towards Church Road where development includes 2-storey houses, the part-hipped ends of the roof, and the sensitive use of materials. However, despite these efforts, because of the width of the proposed house, these factors would not diminish its effect on the character of the area of more modestly scaled bungalows to which it belongs, and in which context it would appear as an overdevelopment.
9. I note that the appellant describes the existing house as being inefficient in energy and space terms; however, these factors do not outweigh the harm identified above from its replacement. While the proposal is smaller than the proposal on this site which was the subject of an appeal¹ dismissed in 2013, my findings above are similar to the conclusions of the Inspector in that case.
10. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the street scene and the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011 to 2029) adopted 2016, which requires development to contribute to local distinctiveness, the sense of place and the street scene, and to have regard to scale, layout, appearance of the surrounding area and the relationship to neighbouring buildings. Nor would the proposal accord with the Framework (paragraph 58) which says that decisions should aim to ensure that developments respond to local character and reflect the identity of local surroundings. It would also be contrary to advice in 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

11. I have had regard to the concerns raised by local residents, many of which I have considered within the main issues. I have taken into account the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of surrounding occupiers, in particular those at 3 Heath Road. However, given the height of the proposal and its location within its plot, there would be no adverse impact on the outlook of neighbours. The risk of overlooking from the dressing room of the proposal into the flank windows of No3 would be mitigated to some degree by the hedge on the side boundary. An obscure glazing condition to this window would exclude the risk of any residual loss of privacy. The proposed development

¹ Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/A/13/2204934

² Planning Practice Guidance, paragraph:007, ID 26-007-20140306

would not therefore cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of surrounding occupiers.

Conclusion

12. Whilst the development would provide additional living space this is outweighed by the harm it would cause to the street scene and 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