



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 August 2017

by S M Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP FCIHT MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17th August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/J0350/W/17/3174339

14 Belmont, Slough SL2 1SU

- 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 Malik Abid against the decision of Slough Borough Council.
 - The application Ref P/14363/001, dated 24 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 17 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is erection of a 2 bedroom detached house on land adjacent to 14 Belmont.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The application form stated that the development proposed was a 3 bedroom detached house. However, the plans, the appeal form and the Council's decision notice all relate to a 2 bedroom dwelling. I have therefore determined the appeal on that basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed dwelling on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. Belmont is part of a large residential estate characterised by two-storey semi-detached and terraced dwellings with strong repetitive design features. The end-terrace properties have distinctive gables whilst the middle of the terrace has a pitched roof. This creates a 'book-end' feature to each of the blocks. The houses nearest the junctions have larger plots. This allows more open corners which contribute to the character of an area which is otherwise densely developed.
5. No 14 is an end-terrace dwelling on a prominent corner site at Belmont's junction with Greenside. There is a significant gap between its flank wall and the back of the footway. The proposal seeks to erect a detached house in this area, the front and rear elevations of which would align with the host property. The flank wall would be hard up against the site's boundary and the front garden would be restricted to a small triangular area of land immediately adjacent to the junction.
6. In my view the introduction of a detached house would appear awkward and out of keeping with the existing terrace. It would fail to respect the pattern and layout of the estate with the front gable being a distinctive feature of a number of the corner properties. I consider this to be the case notwithstanding the presence of a new dwelling that has been constructed adjacent to a gable-ended property at No 52.

7. On the corner opposite to No 14 is a semi-detached property with a pitched roof. Its flank wall is set back from the footpath by a similar distance to that of No 14. This gives the junction a symmetrical and open appearance, which would be seriously eroded with the introduction of the appeal proposal. The arrangement of properties around the junction of Belmont with Thorndike is different and did not result in a comparable loss of symmetry with the construction of No 52a.
8. The Council's Supplementary Planning Document: *Residential Extensions Guidelines* (SPD) does not specifically address the situation of constructing new dwellings. However, it provides relevant guidance regarding factors that should be taken into account when assessing a proposal within an existing established residential area. The section of Greenside closest to the appeal site is characterised by side gardens, garages and parking areas and a track that runs between the rear gardens of the dwellings. It does not have a strong building line, so the proposal would not breach it in any harmful way. However, the scheme would conflict with the SPD's recommendation that there should be a minimum 1m set-in from the boundary. The SPD was adopted after the Council had granted permission for the scheme at No 52. That scheme therefore cannot be directly compared with the appeal proposal which I have assessed on its individual planning merits in the light of current relevant guidance.
9. In any event all the Council's policies pre-date the National Planning Policy Framework which states that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. The Framework advocates a design-led approach to the assessment of development proposals to ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area and reinforce local distinctiveness. I consider the proposal's juxtaposition with the gable feature of the host property would introduce an alien feature into the street scene. This harm would be accentuated by the position of the flank wall immediately adjacent to the footway and the erosion of the symmetry and openness of the junction of Belmont with Greenside. This combination of factors demonstrates that the proposal would be unacceptable.
10. I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies CP4 and CP8 of the Slough Core Strategy and saved Policies EN1 and H13 of the Local Plan for Slough which, amongst other things, require all new housing developments to enhance the distinctive suburban character and identity of the area. As saved Policy EN2 specifically relates to extensions to buildings, I do not consider it to be relevant to this case.

Conclusions

11. The Government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and requires applications for housing development to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The proposal would provide an additional small family house in a sustainable location, the principle of which is acceptable. The scheme would provide adequate internal living accommodation in terms of room sizes, ventilation, light and external amenity space. It would not give rise to harmful overlooking of neighbours and adequate parking would be provided for the host property and the new dwelling. All these factors weigh in the scheme's favour.
12. However, I have found that it would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. The benefits that would accrue from the provision of one dwelling would not outweigh this harm. For this reason, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR