
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 December 2017

by R C Kirby BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 9th January 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/W/17/3179366

3 Clevehurst Close, Stoke Poges, Buckinghamshire SL2 4EP

- 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 Jamshid Diwan against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/02437/FUL, dated 21 December 2017, was refused by notice dated 16 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is described as resubmission of application for the demolition of existing 2 storey 3 bedroom property and erection of a new 2 storey 4 bedroom property on the same site, including basement and loft room family entertainment rooms plus additional crossover.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, having particular regard to the design of the new dwelling.

Reasons

3. Clevehurst Close is an attractive suburban road comprising large detached dwellings of individual design, set back from the road behind driveways and front gardens. The area has a spacious quality as a result of the layout of development in the road and spaces between the dwellings. The proposal is to demolish the existing 2 storey dwelling with single storey elements to the side and construct a 2 storey dwelling with accommodation in the roof space and basement.
4. Policy EP3 the South Bucks District Local Plan (LP) states that development will only be permitted where, amongst other matters, its scale, layout, height and design are compatible with the character and amenities of the site itself, adjoining development and the locality in general. LP Policy H9 has similar aims in respect of residential layout and design. South Bucks Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (CS) Core Policy 8 requires new development to be of a high standard of design and make a positive contribution to the character of the surrounding area. To help achieve this, character areas have been identified in the South Bucks Townscape Character Study Area (TCSA).

5. The Council has indicated that the appeal site is located within a Formal Suburban Road character area. The TCSA identifies such areas as relating to suburban roads that have a particular consistency and formality in their character. Characteristics include regularly spaced buildings which are placed parallel to the roads with consistent building lines, and uniform plot sizes and shapes. Threats to the character of such areas have been identified as including the redevelopment of individual houses which could undermine the consistent character of individual roads.
6. Whilst pre-dating the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), these policies are broadly consistent with its approach to design and the account that should be given to the character of different areas. The Framework states at paragraph 56 that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute to making places better for people. Paragraph 58 states that planning decisions should amongst other matters, establish a strong sense of place and respond to local character and history, and reflect the identity of local surroundings and materials, while not preventing or discouraging appropriate innovation.
7. The new dwelling would be taller than the existing property but similar in height to neighbouring dwellings. It would be set off the party boundaries with Nos 1a and 5 Clevehurst Drive. In this regard the new dwelling would reflect the character of the area.
8. However, although its 2 storey appearance would respect nearby development, the overall size of the dwelling would be significantly greater than both the dwelling it is intended to replace and nearby dwellings. It would be significantly wider than nearby development which would not be broken up by lower roof heights which is a characteristic of the area. As a result, the proposal would have a significantly greater bulk and massing than nearby development. It would result in an incongruous, prominent addition in the street scene which would be significantly at odds with the more modest proportions of nearby development. The dormer windows within the front elevation would draw further attention to the uncharacteristic scale of the building.
9. In light of the foregoing, I conclude that the proposal would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of this attractive area. Accordingly the proposal would conflict with the design and character aims of LP Policies EP3 and H9 and CS Core Policy 8, the aims of the TCSA and the design and character aims of the Framework. The appellant's assertion that the new dwelling would be sustainable does not outweigh the harm identified.
10. I note the appellant's submissions that the scheme before me is the result of discussions with the Council and that it was recommended for approval by the planning officer. However the Council found, following a site visit and after considering a detailed report that the scheme was not acceptable and refused planning permission. I have found that the proposal would be harmful for the reasons given. These matters do not therefore weigh in favour of the proposal.

Conclusion

11. For the above reasons, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

R C Kirby

INSPECTOR