
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 November 2017

by Rory MacLeod BA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6th February 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/N1920/W/17/3180720

1 Sparrows Way, Bushey WD23 1FD

- 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 Blenheim Homes against the decision of Hertsmere Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 17/0459/FUL, dated 7 March 2017, was refused by notice dated 6 June 2017.
 - The development proposed is construction of new detached 2 storey 3 bed house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises residential garden land currently forming a side garden to 1 Sparrows Way. It has a tapering shape with a front boundary to Sparrows Herne (the A.441), a rear boundary to Brooke Close and an amenity strip with grass, trees and shrubs between the two roads to its western side. The site is bound by a close boarded fence to these boundaries, though this is largely screened to the rear and western boundaries by adjacent vegetation.
4. The surrounding area is predominantly residential in character but of varied appearance. The appeal property is part of a row of four detached houses fronting Sparrows Way, a spur road off Sparrows Herne. On the opposite side of Sparrows Herne are two recently constructed buildings with flats on four floors. Alongside these are a row of three storey town houses. To the rear of the site there are semi-detached houses and maisonettes on lower ground facing Brooke Close.
5. Whilst the houses in Sparrows Way form a gentle arc to the highway, the forward siting of the proposed house by approximately 3m would result in an uncharacteristically large step within this arc. The proposed house would be of similar profile to others in the row with a gable ended roof over two floors, but its forward siting and separation of about 6m at first floor level from no.1 Sparrows Way would result in the dwelling being an unduly conspicuous and relatively isolated feature in the frontage street scene.

6. The siting of the dwelling is constrained by the limited depth and size of the site. When viewed from close quarters the space around the building would be dominated by the parking and turning arrangements to the front and side of the dwelling. There would be sufficient private garden area to satisfy standards relating to minimum provision levels, but the rear garden would be short in depth and dominated along its length by trees in the adjacent verge to Brooke Close. Notwithstanding the mixed character of dwelling types in the surrounding area, the proposal would have a cramped appearance at variance with the more spacious character of development nearby.
7. As such, the proposal would conflict with policies SP1, CS1 and CS22 of the Core Strategy (2013) (CS) which require all development to be of high quality design and appropriate in scale, appearance and function to the local context, taking advantage of opportunity to improve the character and quality of an area. Similarly the proposal would be contrary to policies SADM3 and SADM30 of the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Plan (2016) (SADM) which require new residential development to be of a scale and design which respects its immediate surroundings including the local pattern of development. There would also be conflict with the design considerations of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in these respects.

Other Matters

8. In relation to the findings of the Landscape and Visual Appraisal that accompanied the appeal application, I accept that the proposal would not be conspicuous when viewed from the rear or from the west having regard to screening vegetation and that the removal of the close boarded fence to Sparrows Herne would be a benefit in the appearance of the street scene. I also note that there is a step forward in the arc of buildings at the opposite end of Sparrows Way. But these factors do not lead me to a different conclusion in respect of the proposal's conspicuous appearance and cramped nature in relation to its impact on the character of the area.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to the Housing White Paper "Fixing our Broken Housing Market" and to the general need for additional housing. The Council has a five year supply of land for housing. The benefit arising from the provision of a single additional unit does not outweigh the harm to the character of the area arising from the proposal.
10. I have had regard to the views expressed by local residents. Notwithstanding the lower ground siting of dwellings in Brooke Close facing the site, there would be sufficient separation to the rear wall of the proposed house to ensure that there would not be a material adverse effect on living conditions for these occupiers. I concur with the Council's findings that the proposal would be satisfactory in relation to parking provision and access to Sparrows Herne.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, the proposal would have a material adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Rory MacLeod

INSPECTOR