The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 September 2018

by Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 17 October 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/Q1255/W/18/3200855
9 Martello Road South, Poole BH13 7HF

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
- The appeal is made by Mr P Ling of Brownseabuilt Ltd against the decision of Poole Council.
- The application Ref APP/17/01070/P, dated 11 July 2017, was refused by notice dated 20 October 2017.
- The development proposed is described as, demolish existing dwelling house and erect 3 dwelling houses.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application has been made in outline for approval of access and landscaping, with matters of layout, appearance and scale reserved.

3. The plans upon which the Council's decision was based are marked 'indicative', and I have considered the plot layouts shown on this basis. A further 'alternative layout' was presented within Appendix 4 of the appellant's appeal statement, and I have considered this an illustration of the scope of variation which might be possible.

4. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) came into force during the course of the appeal. The parties have been given the opportunity to comment on the revisions, and I have also taken it into account in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

6. The site is located adjacent to the junction of Martello Road South with Oratory Gardens. It is currently occupied by a bungalow which forms part of a development of dwellings along Oratory Gardens. These are loosely arranged on broad and spacious plots, and feature spreading building forms that vary in height as the road runs downhill; moving from bungalows close to the junction, to split-level designs on the slope, to 2-storey dwellings as the ground levels off. This provides development along Oratory Gardens with a distinctive design

character which is emphasised by the gateway feature at the entrance to the cul-de-sac.

7. The existing bungalow is accessed from Martello Road South, but is not clearly visible along this frontage given heavy screening of the plot by vegetation. The plot has a broader and more open frontage on Oratory Gardens. This would remain the case within the proposed scheme. I therefore agree with the Council that the site's primary visual and spatial relationship both is, and would remain with Oratory Gardens, and that the proposed development would be principally viewed in this context.

8. The development would entail subdivision of the existing plot into three. The consequential increase in plot density and the relatively tight spacing of the proposed dwellings would be apparent from Oratory Gardens. This would be further emphasised by the proposed split access that would itself be an uncharacteristic feature within the street. Regardless of the way in which plots were subdivided internally, the spaciousness of the plot would be significantly reduced.

9. It would be possible to increase the spacing of the dwellings as shown on the alternative layout, or by making their footprints more compact. However this would not alter the perceived loss of spaciousness by virtue of the number of units and built form that would remain visible. Furthermore the shape of the site, presence of trees and the positions of the accesses all place significant constraints on the scope of further variation which might be possible. I therefore consider that the proposed plot subdivision would conflict with the established layout and visual character of Oratory Gardens, and would appear intrusive and cramped in this context.

10. Taking into account the level of accommodation proposed it is reasonable to consider that the height of the dwellings would exceed that of the existing bungalow on site. Height might be further increased if the building footprints were made more compact. Either way the development would be more visible within Oratory Gardens than the existing bungalow, accentuating perception of the adverse effects outlined above.

11. Planning permission has recently been granted for two dwellings on the appeal site, reference APP/17/01755/F (the approved scheme). Whilst the approved scheme would share some of the general characteristics of the appeal scheme it would be more spacious, and plot widths would also be more closely comparable with those of other dwellings within the street. As such the approved scheme would be more consistent with the established pattern of development within Oratory Gardens and consequently less harmful than the appeal scheme.

12. Three dwellings have recently been constructed at 8 Martello Road, roughly opposite the site. The closely spaced layout and form of these dwellings strongly contrasts with that along Oratory Gardens. In my view the development at No 8 does not provide a justification for permitting three dwellings on the appeal site.

13. The submissions also make reference to recent planning permissions for two blocks of flats (ref APP/17/00785/F and APP/16/00631/F) at sites on Martello Road South. These permissions illustrate an ongoing process of change along the southern-most part of Martello Road South, but one which nonetheless

reflects the existing character of development towards the junction of Martello Road South with Western Road. This is distinctly different to the character of Oratory Gardens. Notwithstanding the fact that one of these developments would share a boundary with the appeal site, the context within which they would be viewed is also distinctly different to that of the appeal site for the reasons outlined above.

14. I conclude that the development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policies PCS5 and PCS 23 of the Poole Core Strategy 2009, which amongst other things, seek to secure development whose type, scale, density and layout would respect the setting and character of the site. Although these policies were adopted some time ago, they are consistent with the Framework's approach to promoting good design. I therefore do not consider that conflict with them is diminished.

Other Matters

15. Both parties agree that there would be a need to provide mitigation of potential impacts on the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area and Dorset Heaths Special Area of Conservation, in the event that the appeal had been allowed. However, given my findings on the main issues this is not a matter I need to address further.

16. I accept that the site is well located with regard existing services. However, one additional dwelling would make only a marginal contribution to the delivery of housing. Paragraph 68(c) of the Framework, indicates that great weight should be given to the benefits of using suitable sites for windfall in existing settlements. Nonetheless paragraph 122(d) advises that planning decisions should take account of the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character with regard to increased densities. Consequently the benefits of providing an additional dwelling would not outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified.

Conclusion

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

Benjamin Webb

INSPECTOR