The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2018

by Thomas Hatfield BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29th October 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/N4205/W/18/3206290
Deane Golf Club, Broadford Road, Bolton, BL3 4NS

- 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 Brett Ross of Deane Golf Club against the decision of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.
- The application Ref 03455/18, dated 23 April 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2018.
- The development proposed is for the erection of two detached dwellings.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application is in outline with all matters reserved for future consideration. Drawings showing an indicative layout were submitted with the application, and I have had regard to these in determining this appeal.

3. A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework ('the Framework') has been published since the appeal was lodged. The main parties were given the opportunity to comment on any relevant implications for the appeal. I have had regard to the responses and the Framework in reaching my decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites, as required by the Framework. In these circumstances, Paragraph 11 of the Framework states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. I return to this matter in the overall balance, below.

Character and appearance

6. The appeal site consists of an area of undeveloped land on the western side of Armadale Road. It is situated on the edge of Deane Golf Club and forms part of the landscaped boundary to the golf course.

7. The appeal site is positioned on a bend in Armadale Road and is visible in longer views from both the south east and north east. It is also elevated in relation to the land to the north east which increases its prominence in views from that direction. The site currently consists of mature planting that acts as a soft landscaped edge to the golf course. This landscaping contributes significantly to the pleasant verdant character of the area. Whilst the development is in outline with all matters reserved, it would inevitably involve the removal of part of this landscaping, including a section of the hedgerow and a number of trees. This would significantly change the appearance of the site, which would come to resemble the adjoining housing estate. This would erode its contribution to the character of the area in a prominent position within the street. It would also appear as an encroachment beyond the clear urban edge formed by this belt of landscaping.

8. It is asserted that that the majority of the appeal site cannot be seen from the road. However, visibility into the site is restricted by the existing hedgerow and trees, the removal of which would be harmful to the character of the area. Any compensatory planting at the rear would provide limited mitigation in this regard. Moreover, I do not consider that the partial opening up of views into the golf course would be a significant benefit in this case.

9. The appeal site is also designated as Protected Open Land under Policy CG6AP of Bolton's Allocations Plan (2014). This policy seeks to restrict the development of areas of Protected Open Land unless one of a series of criteria is met. In this case, none of those criteria would be met and so the proposal would be contrary to Policy CG6AP in this regard.

10. It is asserted that the Council has dismissed applications on areas of Protected Open Land regardless of the characteristics of the particular site. However, I have come to my own view on the appeal proposal rather than relying on the approach the Council may have taken elsewhere.

11. For the above reasons, I conclude that the development would significantly harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Policy CG3 of the Bolton Core Strategy (2011) and Policy CG6AP of the Bolton's Allocations Plan (2014). These policies seek to restrict development on areas of Protected Open Land, and ensure that new development is compatible with the surrounding area.

Other Matters

12. The development would generate only a modest amount of additional traffic and would have good visibility from the site frontage. I further note that the Highway Authority has not objected to the development on these grounds.

13. It is asserted that there is a particular shortage of sites of this size and character within the borough. However, no information has been submitted to support this assertion and so I am unable to attach significant weight to it.

Overall Balance and Conclusion

14. As set out above, I conclude that the development would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, and would be contrary to Policy CG3 of the Bolton Core Strategy (2011) and Policy CG6AP of the Bolton's Allocations Plan (2014) in this regard. Balanced against this, the development would provide a modest contribution to the supply of housing, on a small site,

to which I attach moderate weight. Moreover, there would be some limited economic benefits including the creation of employment, and the purchasing of materials and furnishings.

15. Overall, however, I consider that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits in this case. Accordingly, the application of Paragraph 11 of the Framework does not indicate that permission should be granted. In the circumstances of this appeal, the material considerations considered above do not justify making a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

16. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Thomas Hatfield

INSPECTOR