



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 July 2019

by Andrew Tucker BA (Hons) IHBC

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/W/19/3222430

Land adjacent 1 Marls Road, Botley SO30 2EY

- 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 Jonathan Jay against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
 - The application Ref F/18/84230, dated 3 October 2018, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in a suburban area, close to the countryside edge of Hedge End. It comprises an area of garden associated with an existing detached dwelling at the northern end of Marls Road. The existing dwelling faces towards Marls Road and is of a design that is consistent with other dwellings on this side of the road, comprising alternating semi-detached and detached dwellings constructed in brick with tiled roofs, and vertical tile hanging over the front doors. The consistent design and spacing of these dwellings gives the street a strong character and identity.
4. The side of the existing dwelling is broadly parallel with the busy A334 to the north. This side elevation has a secondary character, but does include three windows. Owing to the width of garden between the side of the existing dwelling and the A334, and the fence and well-established hedge along the boundary, the existing side elevation is not particularly prominent to view from this perspective, and does not form a significant part of the existing streetscene to this side of the A334. There are no other properties fronting this side of the A334 in the immediate vicinity of the site. There are buildings on the other side of the road, but there is little consistency to their character, appearance or scale.
5. The proposal would involve dividing the existing plot into two narrower plots. The proposed dwelling would be alongside the existing dwelling with elevations that would face towards the A334 and Marls Road. Unlike the other dwellings at Marls Road the proposed dwelling has been designed so that its principle

elevation would front the A334. Two windows would be formed in the elevation facing Marls Road. This would be similar to the adjacent elevation of the existing dwelling, but the rest of the proposed elevation that would face Marls Road would be blank, whereas the comparable elevation of the existing dwelling also incorporates a wide front entrance, emphasised by the length of tile hanging above. As a result, the proposed dwelling would appear to turn away from Marls Road, which would be at odds with the orientation of the existing dwelling and others on this side of the road. The impact of this different orientation would be made more noticeable as a result of the very close siting of the proposed dwelling alongside the existing dwelling. Such close spacing would also not accord with the regular wider spacing of existing dwellings along this side of the road. Therefore, by virtue of the orientation of the proposed dwelling and its close proximity to the existing dwelling, I find that the proposal would not assimilate well with the existing built form and this would cause harm to the existing well-defined character of Marls Road.

6. The north elevation would face the A334, but from this perspective would still be seen in the context of the existing built form of Marls Road. The roofs of the existing dwellings have simple singular gable or hipped forms, whereas the proposal incorporates two portions of roof with a section of flat roof, and eaves that are punctured by first floor windows in two different manners. At its northeast corner the proposed dwelling would have a roof that projects out over a wall that is canted back to fit within the constraints of the narrowing plot. This poor arrangement would be emphasised by the large projecting window, which breaks the eaves line and would not relate well to the other first floor windows. In combination, the proposed dwelling would have an overly complicated form and a lack of architectural integrity that would not relate well to the simple form and design of the existing buildings at Marls Road, nor would it offer any enhancement to the A334 streetscene.
7. Furthermore, it is unclear from the details before me whether or not the existing boundary alongside the A334 would be retained. The existing boundary is well established and provides a good sense of enclosure to the side of the existing garden. The proposed front elevation could sit behind this retained boundary, which would mean that the front door and ground floor windows would be largely hidden behind the tall fence and hedge, which could be overbearing for future occupiers of the dwelling given that this elevation would face north. Alternatively, the boundary fence and hedge could be removed, which would result in the front of the proposed dwelling opening directly onto the busy main road. Neither solution is likely to be desirable for future occupiers, and this uncertainty weakens the whole design approach whereby the proposed dwelling would be orientated with its principle elevation facing in this direction.
8. In support of the proposal the appellant suggests that the existing garden is incongruously large for the dwelling and that it makes no contribution to the visual qualities of the area. I found the plot to be of a comparable length to others in the area, with its additional width at the western end offset by its tapering shape to the east. I cannot agree that it is so large that it is disproportionate to the scale of the existing dwelling. Furthermore, whilst it may make no particular contribution to the character of the area, its current undeveloped form cannot be considered to cause harm.

9. In further support of the proposal the appellant suggests that it is not necessary to simply replicate the design of the existing dwellings, that the use of weatherboarding is in accordance with the Council's design guidance, and that the proposal would make efficient use of the land. I accept that the appellant has put forward an individual design solution for the plot in an attempt to respond positively to the constraints of the site, including its corner plot characteristics and the use of different materials. I also accept that the delivery of a new housing unit weighs in favour of the proposal, taking into account the suitability of the location for new housing. However, these matters are not sufficient to outweigh the proposal's harmful impact on the character and appearance of the area.
10. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Saved Policy 59.BE of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review 2001-2011 (LP 2001-2011), Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2011-2029 Revised Re-submission (LP 2011-2029), Policy DM1 of the Emerging Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 (LP 2016-2036), and paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which together seek to ensure that development proposals are well designed to respect the site context including its character and appearance.

Other Matter

11. The appeal site is within the buffer area of the Solent and Southampton Special Protection Area and Ramsar site and the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation. The addition of a residential unit within this area would be likely to have a significant effect on the internationally important interest and features of these areas, in combination with other plans and projects. In accordance with Saved Policy 25.NC of the LP 2001-2011, Policy DM9 of the LP 2011-2029 and Policy DM11 of the LP 2016-2036 development will not be permitted within the buffer zone unless mitigation measures have been secured. However, as I am dismissing the appeal the likely significant effect will not occur and this matter does not therefore need to be considered further.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons above, the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Tucker

INSPECTOR