The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 July 2019

by David Carter BSc MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 30 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/A1910/W/19/3224053
42 Beaconsfield Road, Tring HP23 4DW

- 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 Metro Capital Securities Ltd against the decision of Dacorum Borough Council.
- The application Ref 4/02023/18/FUL, dated, 9 August 2018 was refused by notice dated 15 November 2018.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling. Construction of 3 new dwellings.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. This is the impact of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The development proposed is for the demolition of a single detached dwelling on a large plot, including large gaps to either side, and its replacement with 3 new, 4-bed dwellings comprising one detached and 2 semi-detached. Beaconsfield Road is an attractive residential road comprising mainly two storey detached and semi-detached properties, with some bungalows. The age of construction and thereby appearance of buildings vary which adds to the visual character. All broadly follow a consistent building line. Redevelopment and intensification has already occurred on some plots on Beaconsfield Road. There are examples where the spaciousness still evident in the majority of the street scene has not always been maintained. Generally, the dwellings are set within spacious plots which contribute significantly to the overall character of the street scene by opening views behind the building frontages.

4. There is no dispute on the principle of demolition and residential redevelopment of No 42. This has been shown by subsequent approval for two, 5-bed detached dwellings (4/00061/19/FUL) following the decision to refuse permission for the appeal proposal.

5. The density of the appeal proposal falls within the range specified in the development plan (Dacorum Borough Local Plan 2004 (LP), saved Policy 21:

density residential development, 30-50 dwellings per hectare) whereas the two dwelling scheme falls slightly below the policy requirement. However, the approved scheme is for large dwellings where the resultant density is affected by the prevailing length of gardens along this side of Beaconsfield Road whereas the appeal proposal would significantly exceed densities in the immediate area.

6. The three dwellings proposed, in effect, would maximise the development potential of the site by reducing the space from the boundaries to Nos 40 and 44 to a minimum. The gap between the semi-detached property and the detached house would be significantly less than one metre. This has a significant impact in terms of the scale and massing of the proposed development.

7. The appellants also refer to saved LP Policy 10: optimising the use of urban land. This requires that "vacant or underused land and buildings should be brought into the appropriate use(s) as soon as practicable". In this appeal, however, the site and existing dwelling are neither vacant, nor underused. This policy also requires that new development should be "designed to achieve the maximum density compatible with the character of the area, surrounding land uses and other environmental policies in the plan". In my view, the appeal proposal would go beyond this point.

8. I note a recent decision (4/02758/18/FHA) for a modest two-storey side and rear extension to 44 Beaconsfield Road. This will have the effect of narrowing the gap between the proposed detached dwelling and No 44 adding to concerns of overdevelopment associated with the appeal proposal.

9. Each dwelling would be provided with two car parking spaces to the front. The County Council have not objected in relation to the level of parking proposed. I note that the parking standards are maximum so the deficiency of one space per dwelling would not, in itself, be problematic.

10. However, the parking spaces would dominate the frontages, especially the pair of semi-detached dwellings, together with associated crossovers of the footway. The appellant makes the point that scope for a third parking space exists for the occupiers of each dwelling. This would be through on-street parking adjacent to the cross-over at each property, in the event the two spaces provided are already occupied. Nevertheless, the provision of the three dwellings could lead to displacement of parking demand along the street.

11. It appears to me that this situation exacerbates the harm caused through the scale and massing of the proposal. Furthermore, the cramped nature of the proposed development means there would be insufficient space at the side of any of the three dwellings to help ameliorate this position.

12. Bringing these themes together, the proposal would lead to over-development of the site through the overall massing of development and cramped appearance that is out of character with the area. I come to this view having regard to the other instances where spaces between dwellings have already been compromised. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan and supplementary guidance. Policy CS11 of the Dacorum Core Strategy (CS, 2013) refers to respecting typical intended densities and also requires enhancement of "spaces between buildings and general character". CS12: requires sufficient space for servicing and integration with street character. The

Tring Character Area Appraisal makes specific reference to the importance of spaces between dwellings.

Other matters

13. The site is located close to a parade of shops and is in a reasonably accessible location. The development would contribute to the number of family homes in the area. However, these are not sufficient reasons to outweigh the harm I have found.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons stated above, and having taken into account all relevant matters, I conclude that the appeal proposal would lead to the overdevelopment of the site, leading to massing and a cramped form of development that would be harmful to the character of the area contrary to the provisions of the development plan and linked policy guidance. Accordingly, I hereby dismiss this appeal.

David Carter

INSPECTOR