



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2019

by S Thomas BSc (hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 02 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/19/3234484

2 Reading Road, Chineham, Basingstoke RG24 8LN

- 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 H Williamson against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 18/03730/FUL, dated 21 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 1 July 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of four no. 2 bedroom maisonette flats following demolition of existing bungalow.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The site address on the application form was incorrect as it referred to 3 Reading Road. I have therefore taken the address from the decision notice. This is reflected in the banner heading above.
3. I have used the description of development from the Council's decision notice and appeal form. This comprehensively describes the development including the demolition of the existing bungalow rather than the description given on the application form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal site is located at the end of a line of residential properties on Reading Road within a predominantly residential area. To the west of the site is an area of single storey commercial development. The residential properties along Reading Road are varied, with a mix of single storey and two storey detached properties of varying styles. Whilst the principal form in the immediate vicinity of the site is single storey bungalows, a detached two storey dwelling lies adjacent to the appeal site. Although varied in style, the predominant character is of detached properties set behind large front gardens. Semi-detached properties are not characteristic of the street scene along Reading Road.

6. The proposed maisonette flats would be in a semi-detached two storey form. The proposed development would be no higher than the adjacent dwelling and thus the proposed building height on this front elevation would not appear out of character. A two-storey form would not be obtrusive given the surrounding varied building heights along Reading Road. However, the appeal site is wider than neighbouring plots and the proposal would span a considerable width of the plot. Whilst the properties have been staggered the width of the building compared to neighbouring residential properties together with its semi-detached form which is not characteristic of the street scene would make it a dominant and imposing feature along this road.
7. It would also depart from the pattern of properties located centrally in their plots. Whilst I acknowledge the forward projecting elements including hipped roof extensions help break up the front elevations together with the pitched roof form reducing the bulk of the proposal, the scale and bulk of this uncharacteristic large semi-detached form property would not sit comfortably and integrate successfully into the street scene. The massing of the side elevation in particular when viewed from the surrounding street scene would result in it appearing bulky and accordingly an imposing feature out of character with the immediate area. The proposal would therefore cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Whilst there is a two-storey property adjacent to the site, this has a different roof form and its side elevation is stepped in height and thus does not have the same bulky effect the appeal proposal would have when viewed within the street scene.
8. The Council have raised concerns regarding the impact of the proposed boundary fence to the south west of the site. I observed on my site visit that a close boarded fence of a similar form and size as proposed in this appeal has now been constructed on this boundary following a recent grant of planning permission (19/01829/HSE). Thus, it does not need to be considered further in this appeal.
9. I acknowledge there is a variation in the width of properties along this road and the separation distances to their respective plot boundaries, but this needs to be considered alongside the scale, massing and form of properties. It is recognised also that there are examples of backland development along Reading Road and semi-detached properties elsewhere in the area. However, their existence does not alter my view of the unacceptability of the proposal considering the existing street scene. I have also considered the proposed development at 10 Reading Road to which the appellant refers. However, I do not have the full details of this development and in any event, whilst being of two storey form at the rear due to a sloping site, this proposal would be single storey when viewed within the street scene. This single storey detached form is therefore different to the proposal subject of this appeal and therefore does not persuade me the appeal proposal is acceptable.
10. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. Thus, the proposal would conflict with Policy EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2016) and Section 8 of the Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2018) (SPD). Together these documents, amongst other matters, seek development proposals will be of high quality, positively contribute to the existing street scene, have due regard to the scale, layout and appearance of the surrounding area, are visually attractive and ensure that bulk, massing and scale are well

related to context. The proposal would also be in conflict with Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) in seeking to ensure that proposals are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

11. The parties agree that the Council cannot demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites in accordance with paragraph 73 of the Framework. Therefore paragraph 11 of the Framework is engaged. Having regard to footnote 6 of the Framework I do not find that the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development.
12. The proposal would provide 4 dwellings which would assist in contributing to the housing shortfall, although given the small nature of the scheme, this contribution would be limited. Notwithstanding this, the proposal is in a location acceptable for residential development and would provide economic and social benefits through the provision of addition dwellings to support growth and contribute to meeting housing needs. However, in environmental terms the harm I find to the character and appearance of the area would outweigh these benefits. Thus, when assessed against the policies in the Framework as a whole the adverse impacts would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits and I therefore find the proposal is not sustainable development in line with paragraph 11 of the Framework. The conflict with the development plan is not outweighed by other considerations in this case.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons outlined above, the appeal is dismissed.

Stephen Thomas

INSPECTOR