



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 August 2020

by Andrew Smith BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 August 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y0435/W/20/3252193

5 Bramley Meadows, Newport Pagnell MK16 8LZ

- 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 & Mrs P Tolley against the decision of Milton Keynes Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02594/FUL, dated 4 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 2 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of double garage and construction of a single garage attached to No 5 and construction of a detached dwelling with parking for 2 cars on site.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The effect upon the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The site is located within a residential area where properties can generally be observed to be of generous size and positioned upon spacious plots. The group of Bramley Meadows properties situated closest to the site are of one and a half stories in height and exhibit similarities to each other in terms of their design and appearance. Indeed, consistent features include expansive roof slopes interspersed by dormer window openings. A Group Tree Preservation Order dated 1995 (the TPO) exists that incorporates trees located upon the appeal site and that covers a wide local area where mature planting is prevalent. There is thus a spacious, green and somewhat formal residential character and appearance in place local to the site.
4. Protected pine and spruce specimens positioned to the front portion of the site are intended to be retained as part of the scheme. Whilst these trees do not provide a very thick or solid barrier to views, they would nevertheless assist in softening the visual appearance of the proposed dwelling particularly when experienced upon the approach from Wolverton Road. It is also the case that these protected trees would continue to be appreciable when viewed from Railway Walk to the rear of the site.
5. I take no issue with the appellants' stated intention to employ a comparatively contemporary palette of materials and note that the proposed dwelling would complement the front and rear building lines exhibited by No 5 Bramley Meadows (No 5). Furthermore, whilst the proposal involves the sub-division of

No 5's private garden area, I am satisfied that the resultant plot sizes and footprint coverages, when taken in isolation, would be suitably respectful of the general makeup of other plots in the local area.

6. Nevertheless, whilst the proposed dwelling's ridge height would be similar to that exhibited by No 5, the intended construction of two full stories raises concerns. Indeed, the bulk and mass that would be introduced at upper-floor level would be substantial when compared to the typical composition of the properties that are grouped closest to the appeal site. This is perhaps most clearly illustrated by the difference in eaves heights that is apparent when the proposed dwelling and No 5 are compared.
7. Whilst nearby Phippen Close properties can be observed to incorporate gable-ended two-storey features alongside one and a half storey elements, these properties do not have an immediate physical relationship to the site. Indeed, it is the closest situated properties that most strongly define the character and appearance of the appeal site's surroundings.
8. Although the proposed dwelling would be single-storey in-part and would feature stepped back elements, its significant massing above ground floor level would promote the dwelling appearing oversized and cramped within its plot. Indeed, notwithstanding the natural planted assets to be retained on-site, the robust perimeter boundary treatment that already exists and the set-away position of the site relative to Wolverton Road, the proposed dwelling would appear as an unduly prominent and out-of-character addition to the Bramley Meadows streetscene.
9. I acknowledge that the scheme now before me represents a downsized version of an earlier development proposal¹ at the same site that was submitted to and subsequently refused planning permission by the Council. Notwithstanding the relative improvements made in design and character and appearance terms, I must consider the proposal that is now before me upon its own individual merits.
10. For the above reasons, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with Policies D1, D2 and D3 of Plan:MK 2016-2031 (adopted March 2019) and Policy NP4 of the Newport Pagnell Neighbourhood Plan (2016) in so far as these policies require development to enhance the character and appearance of the locality and that buildings are of appropriate scale in relation to other buildings in the immediate vicinity in terms of their height and massing.

Planning Balance

11. The proposal would deliver an additional housing unit and the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019) reaffirms the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes and states that decisions should promote an effective use of land. However, the contribution of only one additional dwelling, which I acknowledge could be built out quickly and which would be located in a central location with good access to surrounding facilities and services, would be modest and would not outweigh the significant harm that I have identified would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.

¹ 19/00952/FUL

12. The proposal conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole, and material considerations do not lead me to a decision otherwise.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Smith

INSPECTOR