
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 September 2020

by James Taylor BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 September 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/20/3253869
10 Lune Close, Basingstoke RG21 4DR

- 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 Mrs Kathryn Nield against the decision of Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00453/FUL, dated 12 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as '2 storey extension to the side of 10 Lune Close to create an end of terrace 2 bedroomed dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. I note that the location of the development varies between the appellant's application and appeal forms. I have taken the site address from the application form as this accords with the site location plan.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the area; and
 - ii) the living conditions of the occupiers of 10 Lune Close and future occupiers of the development having particular regard to the external spaces.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is occupied by a two-storey terraced dwelling located within a residential area. Whilst there has been some evolution in the built form, the area is still characterised by rows of houses and gardens with grass verges to the highways. The appeal site is located prominently along Neath Road, which forms one of the main routes into and through the housing estate. This has a sense of openness provided by the built form being set back from the highway. Consistent with this, 10 Lune Close, which is set perpendicular to Neath Road, has a side garden between its two-storey side elevation and the road.

5. The proposal would bring the built form substantially closer to the highway, building on top of the side garden. The proposal would create a bland, two-storey bulk and mass at the boundary. This would erode the sense of spaciousness at this prominent point within the street scene. Indeed, open streets is one of the Riverdene area's defining characteristics as set out in the Basingstoke and Deane – Urban Character Study for Basingstoke, September 2008 (ACS).
6. Furthermore, the side elevation of No 10 is broadly consistent with the two-storey building line formed by the backs of 11-14 Lune Close. I note that the strong building lines are another characteristic identified in the ACS. The proposal would extend the built form significantly beyond this established building line. The appellant has brought to my attention a number of examples of other developments that project beyond building lines. However, they are not the same as the case before me. For example, 5 Lune Close is located less prominently and retains a side garden. Furthermore, 10 Weysprings Close appears as a modest extension and does not create a new dwelling. Finally, at 19 and 20 Avon Walk there is a different context with a wider grass verge and a long strip of vehicular parking to the rear. As such, I do not find that these examples provide a context to make the development acceptable.
7. The appellant suggests that the proposal would provide a greater degree of enclosure and a focal point in the street scene. However, in the specific context of the appeal site I find that this would be to the detriment of the open character and spatial pattern of the existing built form. The appellant has also highlighted that the appeal site was originally divided into two housing plots when the housing estate was initially planned. However, the site is currently occupied by a single dwelling and planning policies have evolved since that time. As such, I afford this very limited weight.
8. Therefore, in conclusion on this main issue I find that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policy E10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (2011-2029), Adopted May 2016 (LP), paragraphs 127 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the guidance within the Basingstoke and Deane – Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document, July 2018 (SPD). These seek, amongst other aims, to ensure high quality design that positively contributes to local distinctiveness.

Living conditions

9. The proposal would separate the side garden of No 10 retaining only the rear garden for use by the occupiers of the existing property. This garden would have a very limited depth and overall size. Furthermore, the proposed dwelling's garden, although larger, would also be small. I have had regard to the Council's guidance on the provision of external spaces within their SPD at Section 10. This applies to both external garden spaces. The proposed gardens would fall demonstrably below the size requirements at RA2 and RA3.
10. Additionally, the gardens would be at a lower level than the lane to the rear, and a high boundary is required in the interests of maintaining privacy. As such, they would both have a high degree of enclosure. The orientation of the gardens would not entirely mitigate this. As such, the usability of the spaces for sitting out, play space for children, gardening, drying clothes and refuse storage is not of a quality such as to represent a high standard of design as

required by current local and national policy. The Framework states at paragraph 127 that decisions should ensure that developments create places with a high standard of living conditions for existing and future occupiers.

11. The SPD does require consideration to be given to the local context and I have noted that the external spaces would not be entirely out of keeping with the spatial pattern for the Riverdene area, with similar provision at, for example, 6 Lune Close. However, even making allowance for the existing spatial character of the area this does not overcome the concern. Additionally, I have noted that the appeal site is located conveniently for local public open space that has a good range of facilities. However, I do not find that this public space mitigates the inadequacy of the private gardens proposed.
12. Therefore, in conclusion on this main issue I find that the proposal would harm the living conditions of the occupiers of 10 Lune Close and future occupiers of the development having particular regard to the external space. As such the proposal would be contrary to Policy E10 of the LP and Section 10 of the SPD. These seek, amongst other aims, to ensure good design that provides high quality living standards.

Other matters

13. The appellant states that the proposal would provide enhanced natural surveillance of the sub-station opposite the appeal site. However, this is located in a prominent and open position and I have little evidence of any need for greater security. As such, I find little benefit arising.
14. Whilst paragraph 59 of the Framework refers to the objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, the provision of one additional unit would make little meaningful difference. When judged against some of the core planning principles the proposal would perform well in that it would be in an urban area with good access to services and facilities and represent an efficient use of land. However, as set out at paragraph 124 of the Framework, good design is also a key aspect of sustainable development. As such, this does not outweigh the harm that I have identified.

Reasons

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

James Taylor

INSPECTOR