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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 September 2020

**by Andrew Bremford BSc (Hons) MRICS**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 30 September 2020**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/D/20/3248657**

**Emcote, Drove Lane, Chilbolton, Stockbridge SO20 6AB**

- 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 and Mrs David Foster against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref 19/02458/FULLN, dated 30 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 3 January 2020.
  - The development proposed is to raise roof to form chalet bungalow with rooms in the roof and clad exterior with timber.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal upon (i) the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwelling, Grenfell, in respect of outlook; and (ii) the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

3. Emcote is a single storey property located on a prominent corner plot at the junction of Branksome Avenue and Drove Road. The proposal is to raise the roof of the dwelling to form a chalet bungalow with rooms in the roof and clad the exterior with timber.

#### *Living conditions*

4. As a result of the orientation of the two properties, the flank elevation of Emcote faces the rear elevation of Grenfell, one half of a pair of semi-detached bungalows located to the north west of Emcote on lower ground than the appeal property. The primary private outside amenity space of Grenfell is the rear garden area. Although it is not especially small in the context of the size of the property, the rear garden of Grenfell is wider than it is deep. The evidence indicates that, at its longest, it is only around 8.2 metres deep. The existing outlook to the south east from the rear garden of Grenfell is towards a wooden boundary fence, above which part of the flank elevation of Emcote is visible. Emcote is sited approximately 2.3 metres from the common boundary with Grenfell.
5. There is a minor disagreement between the parties about the proposed increase in the height of the roof of Emcote. The Council say that the height

would increase by about 2.35 metres, whereas the appellants say that the proposed ridge height would be some 2.2 metres higher than the existing ridge height. However, irrespective of which figure is correct the appeal proposal would result in a materially larger building with a greater mass than the existing built form.

6. I recognise that the existing gable roof would be replaced by a hipped roof. However, taking into account the scale of the proposal and its proximity to the rear garden of Grenfell, in combination with the fact that the appeal property is sited on higher land, the development would have an enclosing effect and be a dominant and overbearing feature in the outlook from the garden area of Grenfell.
7. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed development would result in a harmful change to the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring property, Grenfell, in terms of outlook. Consequently, it would not accord with the living conditions aims of Policy LHW4 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD 2016 (RLP) which requires, amongst other things, that development provides for the amenity of the occupiers of neighbouring properties.

#### *Character and appearance*

8. Emcote is typical of the development in the immediate surrounding area, the street-scene of which is generally characterised by a mix of single-storey and two-storey properties. So, notwithstanding that the dwelling is positioned on a prominent corner, the proposal to increase the size of the building would be in keeping with the size of most other properties in the vicinity of the appeal site.
9. However, the proposal includes the addition of timber cladding to the exterior of the host building. The submitted plans indicate that the timber cladding would be applied to all elevations of the building. Consequently, in this regard, the external appearance of the resultant property would be significantly at odds with most other properties in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site on the western side of Drove Road which is characterised by mainly brick.
10. The appellants point out that timber cladding, and hangings tiles, as an external material is used on houses in the vicinity of the appeal site. Indeed, hanging tiles, in combination with painted brickwork, is used on detached houses in Durnford Close, which is a short distance from the appeal site on the eastern side of Drove Road. However, at the time of my site visit I did not see any other properties in the immediate surrounding area, including in Durnford Close, where timber cladding has been used on all the elevations of a building.
11. I acknowledge that a significant proportion of houses in Test Rise, a short distance from the appeal site, have painted timber cladding. However, based on the evidence before me, and what I saw at the time of my site visit, the use of timber cladding is mainly limited to first-floor level on the front elevation of some of the properties. Timber cladding on the elevations of properties in Test Rise is not utilised to the extent that it would be on the appeal building. Thus, the proposed use of timber cladding on all the elevations of the appeal building would appear incongruous within the context of the appearance of most other properties in the immediate surrounding area.

12. Reference has been made to a house, Lawnbank, under construction in Station Road which has used timber cladding. However, this property is not within the same context as the appeal site given that it is some distance away and hence it cannot be said that the character and appearance context is identical. In any event, the evidence indicates that timber cladding has been used at first-floor level only and not on the full height of all the elevations of the building as is proposed in this case.
13. In regard to the proposed timber cladding, although the Council's refusal notice refers to 'yellow painted timber', the appellants have confirmed that it is not intended to apply yellow, or any other paint to the timber cladding, instead it will be of a natural wood colour. However, notwithstanding that the proposed timber cladding would be a natural wood colour, it would nonetheless fail to respect or complement the character of the area for the reasons outlined above. Moreover, by virtue of its prominent corner location, the proposed development would have an adverse visual impact when viewed against most other development in the surrounding area.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would be contrary to Policy E1 of the RLP which, amongst other things, states that development should integrate, respect and complement the character of the area in which the development is located in terms of materials.

### **Other Matters**

15. The appellants point out that because Emcote is to the south-east of Grenfell the garden area of the neighbouring property would not be overshadowed for most of the day. However, this is not a matter in dispute and thus it does not alter or outweigh my overall conclusion on the living conditions main issue as set out above.

### **Conclusion**

16. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Andrew Bremford*

INSPECTOR