
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 July 2020

by J P Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 3rd November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/W/20/3246946

Oak Gables, 11 Beechwood Road, Beaconsfield, HP9 1HP

- 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 and Sarah-Lynn Spruzen against the decision of South Bucks District Council.
 - The application Ref PL/19/3633/FA, dated 22 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 December 2019.
 - The development proposed is a replacement 2-storey dwellinghouse.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural matter

2. The emerging Chiltern and South Bucks Local Plan is currently under examination. However, the initial findings question the duty to co-operate. I therefore give this Plan very limited weight.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The site is within an extensive well-established residential area. Beechwood Road is lined by trees and hedges fronting large gardens. There is a consistent building line.
5. The appeal property is currently occupied by a two-storey house with a detached garage to one side. The house is described by the Council as 'mock Tudor' dating back to 1930s, with exposed black timbers, rustic red brickwork and plain tile roof. The Council places the site within a designated 'Residential Area of Exceptional Character' for its landscape, spacious layout and building design. There is also a coherency to the houses in Beechwood Road and the appeal dwelling is one of a row of four which are very consistent in their appearance.

6. The new dwelling would have a similar height and position to the existing. However, the mix and arrangement of rendered panels and substantial glazing would look very strident and at odds with the more typical walling in the area. The proposal would use a framework between the walling panels, but this is not comparable with the 'Tudor' timberwork, as they have a different pattern and colour.
7. The proposed dwelling would be orientated with the roof gabled end on to the road. This would mean that walling would dominate the front elevation. In contrast the mock Tudor dwellings are sited with the ridge parallel to the road which visually gives a softer blend of walling and roof.
8. The proposed dwelling would have a roof span spread across much of the plot, which would appear extremely wide whereas the mock Tudor houses have hipped ends which appear less assertive. The proposed dwelling would also have a low pitch roof, whereas the mock Tudor houses are also characterised by their steep gables, which often appear as offshoots to break up the overall form, mass and roofline.
9. The proposed design would be a contemporary statement, but the design would be inappropriate within this context. It would be overly eye catching and spoil the coherency of Beechwood Close. It would be prominent as the vegetation on the frontage is not continuous and would not obscure the building from all viewpoints.
10. The proposal would be overly dominant so that trees and hedges and other landscape elements would be less noticeable. The new dwelling would become its own focal point, and the eye would no longer be drawn along Beechwood Close as a whole.
11. The appellants provide other examples of dwellings in the vicinity to support their case. However, the appeal building is one of a row of 4 dwellings of this particular Tudor interpretive style and the rest of Beechwood Close has a consistent character with no one house standing out, except for the one quoted example 11 Cambridge Road, which occupies a corner and has a different relationship with its neighbouring dwellings. Furthermore, I do not have the full circumstances of the other developments before me, such as the merits of the previous dwellings occupying these sites. In any event, I have found that there is consistent character here and considered this case on its particular merits.
12. The new building would be more energy efficient than the existing, although this would be offset at least in part by the demolition and construction.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Policies EP3, H9 and H10 of the South Bucks District Local Plan and CP8 of the South Bucks Core Strategy seek to promote appropriate design and protect the character of the area. In particular Policy H10 places the site within an 'Residential Area of Exceptional Character' and criterion (e) requires that the proposal is compatible with the existing development in the vicinity of the application site. Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework promotes design requires respects for the sense of place and similarly the National Design Guide, emphasises the importance of local identity. The Chiltern and South Bucks Townscape

Character Study provides a detailed assessment of the area's character. The proposal would be contrary to these policies and guidance.

Conclusion

14. I therefore conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR