
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 August 2020

by J P Longmuir BA (Hons) DipUD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4625/W/20/3254015

1 Edstone Close, Dorridge, Solihull B93 8DP

- 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 Made Architecture against the decision of Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PL/2019/02791/PPFL, dated 23 October 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 May 2020.
 - The development proposed is part 1 storey and part 2 storey dwelling to the rear of 1 Edstone Close.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Edstone Close is unusual having two distinct elements, a straight section and a wide circle of houses around an open space. The appeal site is on the former element but is visible from the open space and vice versa. The area is characterised by dwellings which the appellant dates from the 1960s. These dwellings have a consistency which reflects their era.
4. The environs of the appeal site are verdant, derived from several trees, frontage hedges and spacious gardens, which are complementary to the views to/from the open space. The site is prominent, and the proposal would remove the frontage hedge, which would make the proposed building very evident. The presence of the proposed building would undermine the perception of this verdant character.
5. The appeal site would not be part of a built-up frontage but rather between two dwellings which face other frontages. Consequently, the proposed house would appear on its own and sideways to the rear elevations of the adjacent houses. This would appear at odds with the existing pattern of building which is long frontages.

6. The proposed dwelling would be close to the two neighbouring houses. The appellant indicates that 1 Edstone Close would be 10m away, which bearing in mind the 2-storey main ridges and side on relationship, would be perceived as cramped.
7. The proposed dwelling would have substantial glazing, which would not be arranged in a conventional pattern but in a vertical bias. This glazing would appear very assertive and overly attract the eye. Whilst there are large windows in the surrounding houses, these are set in conventional arrangements within simple massing and their overall appearance is muted.
8. The proposal would have two roof ridges both of which would be gable end on to the road. This arrangement would also appear very assertive, particularly so from the main element whereby the walling and roof would project forward of the glazing. Contrastingly, the surrounding houses are sited with ridges parallel to the road.
9. The detailing, siting and massing of the proposal would be too strident and would not reflect the modest unassuming character of the surrounding buildings. As a result, the dwelling would dominate the area and spoil the cohesion of the buildings and detract from the significance of the open space.
10. The appellant has suggested other developments as precedents to justify this proposal. However, the designs of these are not the same as the appeal scheme and they are in different locations.
11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Policies P5 and P15 of the Solihull Local Plan seek to promote appropriate design and character in new housing with respect of the context. The Supplementary Planning Guidance New Housing in Context is similar. Paragraphs 127-130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) also promote contextual design. The proposal would be contrary to these policies and guidance.

Planning balance

12. Both parties acknowledge that the Council has a 4.64-year housing land supply and is not meeting its residential land supply requirements. Paragraph 11 (d) of the Framework applies.
13. There are extensive community services, facilities, public transport and employment in the area and such accessibility would support the proposal. Its construction would have economic and social benefits. The new dwelling would also make a contribution towards housing land supply; however, this would be limited from only one dwelling and in any event the housing land shortfall is small.
14. The proposed dwelling would be an energy efficient design; however, this would not outweigh the impact on the character and appearance of the area. Similarly, the dwelling would not be an efficient use of land due to its visual impact.
15. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area. Accordingly, the proposal contravenes paragraphs 127 and 130 of the

Framework which seek to promote well designed places. The land supply shortfall questions the development plan housing policies, but the general thrust of policies P5 and P15, which require sympathetic design, is still an appropriate strategy.

16. In overall balance, I therefore conclude that the adverse impact of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

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

John Longmuir

INSPECTOR