



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 04 December 2020

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 December 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N0410/W/20/3256010

53 Ledborough Lane, Beaconsfield HP9 2DB

- 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 Dhaliwal against the decision of Buckinghamshire Council.
 - The application Ref South Bucks PL/19/3888/FA, dated 07 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 20 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing house and erection of new detached house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and the effect of the proposal on protected species.

Reasons

Character of the area

3. The appeal site is located on Leadborough Lane, a predominantly residential area in Beaconsfield. The site narrows towards its middle and splays towards the street and it is somewhat narrower than the plots surrounding it. The existing dwelling has two storeys though its first-floor accommodation is contained within the roofspace of a long catslide roof and as such it has a modest part single-storey, part two-storey appearance from the street. The rear elevation of the existing dwelling is full two-storeys.
4. Ledborough Lane is recognised as an area of special character in the South Bucks Townscape Character Study (SBTCS). The SBTCS identifies that the special character derives from its high quality landscape, which is sensitive to development due to its uniform pattern of large landscaped plots and mature vegetation.
5. The high-quality landscape of the area is maintained by the set-back of dwellings and use of plot frontages for planting. Whilst some plots in the vicinity of the appeal site have more open frontages or are less landscaped,

making a lesser contribution to the verdant character of the area, the high-quality landscape character is nonetheless maintained. The appeal proposal would be sited on the footprint of the existing dwelling and would generally respect the building line and set-back (which is not uniform in any case). High quality landscaping provision for the scheme could have been secured by way of a condition had this appeal been allowed.

6. As described in the SBTCS, the area immediately surrounding the appeal site on Ledborough Lane, and nearby Ledborough Wood, is indeed characterised by large detached dwellings in generous plots. The overall scale of the proposed dwelling reflects other development within the vicinity and a clear, albeit unsuccessful, attempt has been made to take inspiration from other dwellings in the design. Whilst the Council has expressed concern about the gable roof, there are other examples of such roof types in the vicinity and, by virtue of the positioning of the front-facing gables, the roof would appear hipped on the front elevation in any case.
7. The introduction of more recent development along Ledborough Lane and Ledborough Wood have somewhat interrupted the uniformity of pattern as several dwellings fill the width of their plots or have close relationships with boundaries. These dwellings nonetheless appear well-proportioned relative to the overall size of the plot and the character of large houses situated in generous plots has not been eroded.
8. In contrast, the existing dwelling and plot are uncharacteristically small and narrow for the area. Though the plot splays towards the road, the 'pinch point' at which the existing house fills the width of the plot is clearly visible. Whilst a proposal for a larger dwelling could be more in keeping with the vernacular dwelling type, the proposal must also relate well to the constraints of plot. The existing dwelling fills the width of the plot and is sited at the 'pinch point' as the proposed dwelling would be. The existing dwelling relates well to the plot due to its modest height and part one-storey part-two storey appearance.
9. However, the proposed dwelling would be of a larger scale and would emphasise the relative narrowness of the plot, appearing cramped and providing less relief. Whilst the proposal would comply with the design guidance in relation to minimum distances from boundaries, it would not respond to the pattern and character of the area. The increase in height alone would not create this cramped appearance, but the increase in scale combined with the design of the proposal would. The design attempt to imitate the architectural features of larger dwellings on a smaller scale appears out of proportion with the other dwellings and is cramped within the plot. This is particularly highlighted by the fenestration design of many narrow windows, which would emphasise vertical lines and give the overall appearance of a 'shrunk version' of the nearby dwellings of a grander scale.
10. For these reasons, the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the character of the area, particularly the pattern of large landscaped plots for which the area has been recognised as a green suburban area of special character in the SBTCS. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies EP3 and H9 of the South Bucks District Local Plan (adopted 1999), policy 8 of the South Bucks Core Strategy (adopted 2011) and the guidance within the Framework. These policies seek, amongst other things, to maintain or enhance local character and to ensure development is compatible with the site itself.

Living conditions

11. The proposal includes a rear balcony which would create the potential for overlooking of neighbouring gardens. However, opportunities for overlooking would be confined to the area closest to the neighbouring dwellings given the spacious relationship between dwellings and relative distances by virtue of the large gardens as well as the screening provided by mature vegetation. Both actual and perceived overlooking could be sufficiently prevented with provision of privacy screens, which could have been secured by way of a condition had the appeal been allowed.

Protected species

12. Additional information has been provided with the appeal documents in relation to bats. Had the appeal been allowed, I am satisfied that adequate measures could have been secured by way of a condition to address the (apparently limited) potential for the presence of protected species.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons stated above, I find that the appeal proposal would have an unacceptable adverse effect on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the relevant policies of the Development Plan and the guidance within the Framework. As such, the appeal is dismissed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR