The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 December 2020

by R C Shrimplin MA(Cantab) DipArch RIBA FRTPI FCIArb MCIL

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 January 2021

Appeal Reference: APP/B1550/W/20/3256894
Land at 90 Stambridge Road, Rochford SS4 1DP

- 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 Buckfield against the decision of Rochford District Council.
- The application (reference 19/00663/FUL, dated 11 July 2019) was refused by notice dated 29 January 2020.
- The development proposed is described in the application form as "proposed dwelling to rear of No. 90 Stambridge Road and proposed vehicular crossing".

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main issue

2. The main issue to be determined in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surroundings.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located in the eastern part of Rochford, on the road to the village of Stambridge. Stambridge Road itself is a busy distributor road, with a mixture of properties on its street frontages in the vicinity of the appeal site, including a range of house types and architectural styles.

4. Number 90 Stambridge Road stands at the corner of Mornington Avenue, which is a predominantly residential, quieter road, and here there is a preponderance of bungalows and chalet bungalows, in conventional twentieth century forms. Some development is currently taking place, nevertheless, including a substantial scheme which is currently under construction opposite the southern end of Mornington Avenue, in Rocheway.

5. The existing dwelling at number 90 Stambridge Road is a relatively small building, especially as it stands alongside a two-storey house at number 92, in a diverse streetscene (along Stambridge Road). It is a modest bungalow, with white rendered walls under a hipped roof and a flat-roofed rear extension. The bungalow has a relatively long rear garden that is largely screened by a timber fence along the side boundary with Mornington Avenue. A free-standing

garage building is located at the end of the garden but this part of the original garden has been fenced off separately as a separate plot of land.

6. It is now proposed that a new dwelling should be constructed on this plot, in the form of a small one-bedroom bungalow.

7. The 'National Planning Policy Framework' (which was revised in February 2019) emphasises the aim of "achieving well designed places" in the broadest sense (notably at Section 12), while making effective use of land and encouraging economic activity. It is aimed at achieving good design standards generally, which includes protecting existing residential amenities and providing good standards of accommodation in new development.

8. An emphasis on the importance of good design is also to be found in the Development Plan. Policy H1 of the 'Local Development Framework Core Strategy' (dated December 2011) promotes "the efficient use of land for housing", while seeking to ensure that new development "relates well to the existing street pattern, density and character of the locality". At the same time, Policy CP1 seeks to achieve "good, high quality design". Similarly, Policies DM1 and DM3 of the 'Local Development Framework Development Management Plan' (adopted on 16 December 2014) are also aimed at achieving good design, with special reference to schemes for "infilling or residential intensification".

9. The Council's 'Supplementary Planning Document 2 (Housing Design)' (dated January 2007) is also relevant, though it does not have the same force as Policies in the Development Plan. Again, it seeks to encourage high design standards.

13. The proposed new bungalow would be small in scale, providing a combined lounge, living space and kitchen together with one double bedroom and a bathroom. It would create a useful dwelling, nevertheless, and, because of its size and overall height, it would have only a limited impact on neighbours' amenities.

14. On the other hand, the new building would be inserted between the existing dwelling and number 1 Mornington Avenue, at the rear of the original plot, leaving a much reduced gap in the street frontage in this part of Mornington Avenue. Both the retained garden of number 90 Stambridge Road and the garden of the new bungalow would be rather small and out of character with the surroundings. Moreover, the proposed new development would have a significant impact on the character of the area. The combined effect of the two small buildings would be to fail to recognise the pattern of existing development in Stambridge Road, while creating a cramped and awkward townscape in Mornington Avenue.

15. In short, the proposed new bungalow would not relate well to the existing street pattern, density and character of the locality and would be in conflict with the Development Plan. It would also fail to meet the design objectives of the 'National Planning Policy Framework'.

16. Evidently, the appeal site lies within an established urban area, which is "sustainable" in planning terms, and the proposed development would provide a useful new home, which weighs in favour of the appeal. Nevertheless, I am

convinced that the harm that would be done to the character and appearance of the surroundings outweigh the benefits of the project. Hence, I have concluded that the scheme before me ought not to be allowed and, although I have considered all the matters that have been raised in the representations, I have found nothing to cause me to alter my decision.

Roger C Shrimplin

INSPECTOR