
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 February 2021

by J Davis BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 03 March 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/V1505/W/20/3260386

23 Westley Road, Langdon Hills, Basildon, SS16 5PA

- 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 A Beckford (Pymont Homes Ltd) against the decision of Basildon Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00567/FULL, dated 22 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 29 June 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling; and erection of 2no. new dwellings.
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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 surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a detached bungalow which is located in a prominent position at the junction of Westley Road and Stacey Drive. The existing bungalow is well set in from the boundary with Stacey Road which contributes to the spaciousness of the corner. The surrounding area is mixed in character and appearance, comprising detached bungalows, chalets and two storey dwellings, of various ages and architectural designs. There is also some variation in overall plot sizes and widths along both Westley Road and Stacey Drive.
4. The proposal is for two detached two-storey dwellings, following the demolition of the existing bungalow. Each dwelling would have four bedrooms and a single integral garage. The site would be subdivided to form two plots, with widths of around 8.6metres and 8.8metres.
5. Policy BAS BE12 of the Basildon District Local Plan Saved Policies Document September 2007 seeks to ensure that development does not cause material harm, including harm to the character of the surrounding area, and overshadowing or over-dominance (among other criteria). Further expansion and guidance is contained within the Council's adopted Development Control Guidelines Supplementary Planning Guidance (Approved April 1993; Alterations

- Approved 19 March 1997) (SPG). This document is non-statutory and is for guidance purposes and I therefore accordingly afford it more limited weight.
6. Guideline DC1 of the SPG states that new development should respect or enhance the existing character of the area. Guideline DC3 of the SPG states that planning permission will not be granted for new development with less than a frontage width of 9 metres for detached houses. However, it also states that in some areas, frontage widths greater than the minimum set out may be required so that they are compatible with the existing layout of the area.
 7. The resultant plot widths fall only slightly short of the minimum width set out in Guideline DC3. However, more significantly, the proposed plot widths would also be considerably narrower than most displayed in the local area, although I acknowledge that the adjacent chalet dwelling, is sited on a narrow plot of a similar width to those proposed. This is however an exception in the street scene where most dwellings are located within wider plots.
 8. The proposed dwellings would have a narrow frontage but a considerable depth. The two storey flank walls of the proposed dwellings would retain a distance of about 1 metre to the side boundaries of the site whilst the proposed single storey garages would abut the eastern side boundary of each plot. The proposal would not conflict with the spatial distances set out in Guideline DC17 in this regard. However, built form would extend across much of the width of the site and given the limited width of the plots combined with the scale of development proposed, I consider that the proposed dwellings would appear cramped and overly dominant within their plots. Furthermore, the proposal would significantly detract from the spaciousness of the corner of Westley Road and Stacey Drive due to the scale of the development and by introducing built form in close proximity to the side boundary of the site.
 9. I acknowledge that there are examples of other dwellings in Westley Road and Stacey Drive that also extend across much of the width of their plots. However, these dwellings are on generally wider plots with more space to the front providing them with more of a setting and resulting in less harm to the character and appearance of the street scene and surrounding area.
 10. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development is contrary to Policy BAS BE12 of the LP which (among other things) requires that development does not result in harm to the character of the area including the street scene or be over dominant. Furthermore, the proposal also conflicts with the National Planning Policy Framework which requires development to be of a high-quality design and to respect existing character.

Other matters

11. The Council does not dispute the appellant's contention that it is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing. As such, the relevant policies for the supply of housing should not be considered up to date. I shall address the implications of this for the approach to decision making in the planning balance.

Planning balance and conclusion

12. Paragraph 11 of the Framework explains how the presumption in favour of sustainable development applies. As the Council cannot demonstrate a 5-year

supply of housing land, in line with paragraph 11d) of the Framework, planning permission should be granted unless the application of policies in the Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provide a clear reason for refusing the development proposed.

13. Whilst the Framework refers to boosting significantly the supply of housing, the net increase of an additional unit would only make a small difference. In respect of economic benefits, I acknowledge that future residents of the development would make use of local services and spend in local shops. However, as the scheme is for two dwellings, the impact of this additional spend in the local economy would be limited. The scheme would also result in direct and indirect employment and create a demand for building supplies during the construction phase. Due to the short-term nature of these benefits, I give them only limited weight.
14. In terms of adverse impacts, I have found that the appeal scheme would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with Policy BAS BE12 of the LP and I attribute significant weight to this policy conflict.
15. Bringing all together in the final balance, I consider that the harm to the character and appearance of the area would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies of the Framework when taken as a whole.
16. In conclusion, the other material considerations in this case do not indicate that the development should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
17. For the above reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Davis

INSPECTOR