



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 March 2021

by C McDonagh BA (Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 April 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N4205/W/20/3264317

27 Barnfield Close, Egerton, Bolton BL7 9UP

- 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 Alan Chapman (Neil Pike Architects) against the decision of Bolton Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 09074/20, dated 7 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 12 August 2020.
 - The development proposed is a detached dwelling on land adjacent to 27 Barnfield 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 surrounding area.

Reasons

3. Barnfield Close is formed of semi-detached dwellings set either side of a steeply rising cul-de-sac. Landscaped front gardens with low or no boundary treatments combine with generous gaps between the pairs of properties to create an open and spacious character in the street scene. Houses on the appeal site side of Barnfield Close follow a reasonably consistent front building line although the opposite side displays more offsetting following the curve in the road. The proposed dwelling would be most clearly visible from vantage points along Barnfield close, albeit there is lesser consistency in terms of the design, scale and arrangements of dwelling along Cox Green Road
4. The appeal site comprises the side garden of No.27 which is similar to that of the opposite property in shape and size. These two gardens, set either side of a public footpath, form an open area which affords views of the open countryside beyond Cox Green Road, which defines the northern edge of the housing estate the appeal site is located within. Cul-de-sacs are common within this estate and similar open areas at the heads of these streets are prevalent, allowing the attractive backdrop of open countryside to take prominence in views. This creates a semi-rural character in views towards Cox Green Road which is a considerable contributor to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

5. The proposal would subdivide the garden of No.27 to create a new plot for the proposed detached, two-storey dwelling which would front Cox Green Road. Off-street parking for both the proposed dwelling and on Barnfield Close for No.27 would also be provided.
6. The erection of the dwelling in this location would erode the sense of openness at the end of the street, while its position would encroach into views of the open countryside beyond Cox Green Road. This would diminish the positive contribution this backdrop makes to the character and appearance of Barnfield Close. I agree there is more variety in the design and layout of houses along Cox Green Road when taken as a whole. However, the proposal would be contrary to the distinctive pattern of development here as described above, and discordant as a result.
7. Amendments to the scheme have sought to address previous reasons for refusal of planning permission¹ and the subsequently dismissed appeal². As a result, tall fences have been replaced by soft boundary treatments while the dwelling itself has been repositioned closer to the front elevation of the host property.
8. However, these changes to the design and a positive recommendation to the planning committee from the Council officer do not mean that the proposal is now acceptable. To my mind, the dwelling would nevertheless be intrusive harmful to the prevailing open and spacious character of Barnfield Close and contrary to the established pattern of development in the area due to its prominence and positioning. The appellant states there are other properties in the street which are closer to the open area than the proposal. Be that as it may, these are existing properties which likely predate the current development plan and do not, in themselves, diminish the contribution of the appeal site to local character as discussed above. Regardless, my assessment is based on the proposal before me and this would represent a significant worsening of the prevailing open character of the street scene.
9. To conclude, the proposed dwelling would cause harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As a result, the development is contrary to Policies CG3 and OA5 of the Bolton Core Strategy 2011 (CS) which seek, among other aims, to conserve and enhance local distinctiveness ensuring development has regard to the overall built character and protect views from public areas to the surrounding landscape.

Other Matters

10. I note the appellants' concerns over the Council's handling of the application. However, these are not relevant matters for the appeal process and in determining the appeal I have only had regard to the planning merits of the proposal.

Planning Balance

11. The Council indicates that it cannot demonstrate a five-year land supply of deliverable sites. With that in mind I accept that the proposal would have certain benefits in terms of housing supply and more broadly associated with construction and future occupants.

¹ Ref: 06961/19

² Ref: APP/N4205/W/19/3242464

12. However, the benefits of one new home are inevitably limited. In this instance, the benefits in terms of housing provision relative to necessary forward supply would be confined to an incremental numerical increase, rather than in terms of quality. By consequence, the adverse impacts of allowing the appeal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh any benefits (noting that, inherent in my reasoning above and insofar as is relevant to this appeal, CS policies CG3 and OA5 are consistent with relevant elements of the National Planning Policy Framework)

Conclusion

13. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. There are no material considerations that indicate the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C McDonagh

INSPECTOR