



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 April 2021

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 May 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N1160/W/20/3263222

Land and Garages, Savage Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant permission in principle.
 - The appeal is made by DDRBS against the decision of Plymouth City Council.
 - The application Ref 20/01228/PIP, dated 19 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2020.
 - The proposal is residential development (Planning in Principle for 8-9 dwellings).
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and permission in principle is granted for residential development (Planning in Principle for 8-9 dwellings) at Land and Garages, Savage Road, St Budeaux, Plymouth, Devon in accordance with the terms of the application Ref 20/01228/PIP dated 19 August 2020.

Procedural Matters

2. I have used the site address given within the appeal form as it most accurately conveys its location. I have also taken the description of development from the appeal form for the same reason.
3. The proposal is for permission in principle (PiP). The Planning Practice Guidance advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The consent route has two stages: the first stage establishes whether a site is suitable in principle and the second (the technical details consent) stage is when the detailed proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these two stages.
4. The scope of considerations for the initial PiP submission is limited to location, land use and the amount of development. All other matters are considered as part of the subsequent technical details consent application if the initial application is granted.
5. The main parties agree that the scheme would be acceptable with regard to its location and land use, with the dispute turning on the amount of development proposed. Having no reason to disagree, I assessed the appeal on this basis.
6. At the appeal the appellant submitted an additional drawing Ref SR D.2.1.3. As it provides only a further indication of how the site could be developed, and as the Council had the opportunity to comment on it during the appeal, and indeed had done so beforehand, I had regard to it in my assessment. As with the site section and the other layout drawings which accompany the scheme, I considered it on an illustrative basis.

Main Issue

7. The main issue is whether or not the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to the amount of development.

Reasons

8. The site comprises a long and thin parcel of disused land, accessed from Savage Road to the west, and occupied by a row of modestly sized garages in a state of disrepair. The rear elevations and gardens of housing along Poole Park Road are above to the north with vacant land below to the south. The latter is subject to permission for 102 houses and 102 apartments¹. The new housing adjacent to the appeal site would comprise short terraces of two storey houses.
9. The various layouts provided by the appellant show that each dwelling could exceed the Technical housing standards – nationally described space standard (2015). They also demonstrate that the size of garden or shared amenity spaces could meet the standards of the Plymouth and South West Devon Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2020). Whilst I accept that the geometry of the site poses potential constraints to the usable quality of these spaces, achieving these numerical standards is proportionate to meet the demands of this first stage in the PiP process in regard to these issues.
10. The topography of the site indicates that, even if two storey buildings are sited against or very close to the north site boundary, they would present little more than a single storey to the properties on Poole Park Road. Given that this could potentially be akin to the effects of a typical domestic outbuilding, it seems to me that the effect of the proposal upon the outlook and light to residents in these properties would be acceptable.
11. Levels of noise would be commensurate to that one would typically expect within what is quite a high-density residential environment. If principal living rooms and associated openings were focussed away from Poole Park Road this would also prevent unacceptable effects with regard to privacy and noise.
12. The new housing below the site to the south would be more sensitive to the scale of the proposal. However, there is a possibility to focus much of the built form within the north section of the appeal site. Given the scope for the scale and design of the scheme to respect the heights and distances to neighbouring properties, there is sufficient potential to avoid unacceptable effects on future occupants with regard to outlook. If buildings were to be sited close to the south boundary, directing the aspect from openings serving principal living areas to the east and west would also prevent unacceptable overlooking.
13. With regard to the character and appearance of the area, this part of Barne Barton is partly characterised by large blocks of development in a suburban pattern which in some cases are reasonably set back from the highway with flats that do not always address it directly. I am therefore satisfied that a scheme can be provided which would be acceptable in this regard.
14. Overall, I recognise that the narrow shape of the site and its relationship to existing and future housing will inevitably influence the design of future development within it. However, the evidence before me is adequate for the scheme to meet the requirements of this initial step in the PiP process.

¹ Ref 18/01288/FUL

Ultimately, other detailed issues which have been raised by the Council and interested parties would be appropriately addressed to an application for technical details consent.

15. I therefore conclude that the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to the amount of development. The proposal would accord with Policies DEV1 and DEV10 of the Plymouth and South West Devon Joint Local Plan (adopted 2018) and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Conclusion

16. For the reasons outlined above, and taking all other matters raised into account, I shall allow the appeal.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR