
Appeal Decision

Site Visit made on 29 June 2021

by Martin Allen BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 August 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/H1705/W/21/3271150

Land to Rear of Glenrosa, Woolton Hill Road, Ball Hill, RG20 0NY

- 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 & Mrs M Atherton against the decision of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/03376/FUL, dated 2 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 24 February 2021.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a self-build dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Since the appeal was submitted the Government has published a new National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Comments were sought from the Council and the Appellant, with the Appellant providing comments. I have had regard to these comments and the Council has confirmed that its position has not changed as a result of the revised Framework. As the main parties have had the opportunity to provide comments no injustice has been caused. I have considered the appeal on the basis of the revised Framework.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (i) the character and appearance of the area, and (ii) highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site comprises an area of land located to the rear of existing buildings. There is variety in the design and scale of buildings within the vicinity, which include both dwellings and commercial properties. However, residential properties tend to have a moderate scale, predominantly consisting of single storey dwellings, and both detached as well as semi-detached dwellings with a cottage appearance. As such, there is a modesty to the properties that are viewed along the street. I accept that there is also a commercial property present within the context of the site, which appears as a larger, wider building than the nearby residential properties. Nonetheless, this has a single storey form and is not discordant with the height of the surrounding dwellings.

5. The proposed dwelling would be located to the rear of the existing buildings in the vicinity. Whilst this is not an alien arrangement in the wider area, there being a number of backland properties present, the scale of the dwelling would be greatly in excess of the built form that is currently present. The appellant accepts that the proposal is different from the immediate dwellings in the vicinity. However, while it is contended that the proposal would be screened from view, I am not convinced that this would be the case, particularly from the east.
6. Accepting that the commercial premises is directly to the east of the appeal site, the buildings that comprise this rise only to a single storey in height. The proposed dwelling, which is approximately 8 metres in height, would be clearly visible behind and above the buildings within the commercial site. As a result of this height, together with the length of the proposal of approximately 20 metres, the dwelling would be a highly noticeable feature of the area, which would be far in excess of the scale of existing residential properties. It would also be substantially larger in scale and form than the commercial buildings. Consequently, while it has been designed as a bespoke property, the proposal would be an overly large and incongruous addition to the site, that would relate poorly to the surrounding buildings at this backland location.
7. I note some concern is raised by the Council in respect of the amount of hardstanding proposed. However, given the presence of other backland properties within the area, and their associated accesses and hard surfaced areas, I do not find that the proposal would be harmful in this respect. Nonetheless, this does not overcome the harm I have identified above.
8. Accordingly, the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would thus conflict with policies EM1 and EM10 of the Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan (adopted 2016) (the Local Plan), insofar as they seek to ensure development is sympathetic to the character and visual quality of an area, as well as that development respects the local environment. The scheme would also be contrary to the design aims of the Framework, as well as those of the Basingstoke and Deane – Design and Sustainability Supplementary Planning Document (2018).

Highway safety

9. Access to the site would be gained via a new access track running to the north of the existing property of Glenrosa, along its garden area and terminating at a new turning and parking area for the new dwelling. While I note that the access track is not generous in its dimensions, it would in my view allow appropriate vehicles to access the site. The Council accept that it would be possible for cars and vans to utilise the driveway, thereby allowing the majority of day-to-day vehicles associated with the dwelling to have adequate access. A turning area is also provided, so that vehicles would be able to leave the site in a forward gear. I accept that there may be instances where larger vehicles would not be able to enter the appeal site. However, given the position of the proposal some distance from the nearby road junction, the low speed of traffic that I observed and the instances of on-road parking that were also evident, I find that the occasional parking of vehicles on the road would not be problematic.
10. In terms of parking provision, I note that three spaces are provided for the new dwelling. For the existing dwelling, Glenrosa, a new parking space is provided for at the rear. The submitted plans show that this would be somewhat

constrained by the positioning of the workshop for the new dwelling and the boundary treatment enclosing the garden of Glenrosa. However, it would be possible to control details of the access and egress to this parking space via planning condition and acceptable details could be secured. Moreover, while only a single parking space is shown on the submitted plans to the front of Glenrosa, I observed at the time of my site visit that two vehicles were comfortably parked here, clear of the highway. Thus, it is possible to achieve three appropriate parking spaces for the existing dwelling, subject to planning condition, if the appeal were to be allowed.

11. Accordingly, the proposed development would not result in a detrimental effect on highway safety and would accord with policies EM10 and CN9 of the Local Plan, insofar as they seek to ensure development includes appropriate parking provision and that development provides safe access for all users.

Other Matters

12. I note that the Council has not resisted the appeal scheme on the basis of the principle of the development at this location. However, the lack of harm in this respect is a neutral consideration. Moreover, given the lack of objection to the principle of development, and the harm I identify, whether or not the appeal site comprises garden land is not a matter I need to address.

Planning Balance

13. It is common ground between the parties that the Council is currently not able to demonstrate a five-years supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council confirms that at the current time, when applying a 5% buffer, it has a 4.44-year supply. As such, the presumption in favour of sustainable development, as envisaged by paragraph 11 of the Framework is engaged.
14. The lack of harm in respect of highway safety is a neutral consideration in the planning balance. The scheme would contribute only a single dwelling to the supply of housing in the district. The economic and social benefits associated with the construction and occupation of a single dwelling would be limited. Thus, I find that these matters carry little weight in favour of the proposal. The scheme would also deliver a self-build house which is secured by way of a legal undertaking. This is also a matter that weighs in favour of the proposal.
15. However, having given careful consideration to the balance of factors, I find that the harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area, would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits that would accrue. Thus, the appeal scheme does not benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin Allen

INSPECTOR