



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 December 2021

by Neil Pope BA(HONS) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/N1160/W/21/3280806

Land adjacent to 123 Fort Austin Avenue, Crownhill, Plymouth, PL6 5NR.

- 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 Mrs Helen Darby against the decision of Plymouth City Council.
 - The application Ref. 21/00987/PIP, dated 25/5/21, was refused by notice dated 1/7/21.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a self-build eco dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Reasons

2. This 0.16 ha site lies at the western end of a row of houses in the Crownhill area of the city. It is well-related to services and facilities, including public transport. Outline permission exists for three dwellings to the west of the site, together with a proposed pedestrian link (ref. 18/01444/OUT) into Derriford Community Park Strategic Greenspace (SG). If/when these three dwellings are built, the appeal scheme would be tantamount to infill development. It would add to the stock of housing within Plymouth and assist in meeting a local demand for self-build dwellings. The proposal accords with policies SPT3 and DEV9 of the adopted Local Plan (LP)¹. This weighs in favour of an approval.
3. The appeal site comprises 'greenfield' land within the SG. LP policy PLY41 envisages this SG as a highly valued environmental, social and educational asset. Whilst the site is excluded from the publicly accessible community park, LP policy DEV27 aims to protect and support a multi-functional network of green space. Development that would result in an unacceptable conflict with the function or characteristic of Strategic Green Spaces is to be resisted.
4. Part of the site has been fenced off from the adjoining open space to the north and a new timber fence has been erected along the boundary to Fort Austin Avenue. However, as I saw during my visit, the green open qualities of the site are an integral part of the SG and make a pleasing contribution to the street scene with views across the Forder Valley. Whilst the proposal could be designed to a high standard, it would erode these green open qualities². In so doing, it would result in an unacceptable conflict with the function and characteristic of this strategic green space and detract from the character and appearance of the area. There would be conflict with the objectives of LP policies PLY41 and DEV27. This weighs heavily against an approval.

¹ The Plymouth & South West Devon Joint Local Plan 2014-2034 (2019). This forms part of the development plan.

² Unlike the approval alongside for three houses, the proposal would not provide any benefit to the SG.

5. The Council has informed me that the appeal site functions as a wildlife stepping stone. However, there is no cogent evidence before me to support this and enhancements to biodiversity could be achieved at the technical details stage. There is unlikely to be any conflict with LP policy DEV26.
6. I conclude that the location of the proposed development would be at odds with the Council's objectives for green space provision within the city and would also detract from the character and appearance of the area. There would be conflict with the overall provisions of the development plan. The appeal therefore fails.

Neil Pope

Inspector