



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2022

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11 March 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/T1410/W/21/3281725

18 Mayfield Place, Eastbourne BN22 8XJ

- 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 Mrs Jennifer Turner against the decision of Eastbourne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PC/210298, dated 31 March 2021, was refused by undated decision notice.
 - The development proposed is demolition of detached garage and erection of 1no. two bedroom detached chalet style dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The decision notice is undated. However, the appeal form states that the application was determined on 26 July 2021.
3. The plans indicate that the entrance to the proposed dwelling would be onto a service lane. The Council is concerned that future occupants of the development would feel divorced from the surrounding community and at risk from crime and anti-social behaviour. The appellant has therefore revised the plans to show a new door with pedestrian access onto Gorringe Road. The Council accepts that this would represent an improvement. No party would be prejudiced were I to determine the appeal based on the amended plans.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises part of the side and rear garden belonging to No 18 Mayfield Place. The garden has a frontage onto Gorringe Road and it is prominent within the street scene, particularly in views from the south where it is visible against the backdrop of the allotments and open space of Eastbourne Park. The pattern of built form in the locality is well-defined, with a row of large, detached villas on the west side of Gorringe Road and a mix of terraced and semi-detached houses, some converted to flats, within Mayfield Place. The majority of buildings are two-storey and the architecture displays a strong Victorian theme characterised by bay windows and projecting gables.

6. By contrast, the proposed dwelling would be one and a half storey and built in a chalet style, with single-storey eaves and an expansive roof with half hips. The upper storey would be wholly contained within the roof. In some respects, the building would resemble an oversized garage. However, garages on this scale are not characteristic of the area. There are various outbuildings within the rear gardens of properties on the north side of Mayfield Place, including within the curtilage of No 18. However, these are low level outbuildings the modest scale of which makes them recessive features in local views. The appellant argues that the scheme would improve the site by replacing a pair of unsightly derelict garages, but in my opinion the condition of those structures does not detract significantly from the visual amenities of the area.
7. The proposed dwelling would have substantially greater height and bulk in comparison with the existing garages and this would serve to increase its visual impact. The arbitrary siting of the building in the side garden of No 18 would relate poorly to the established urban grain. Additionally, notwithstanding the use of brick and hanging tiles to reflect nearby buildings, the proposed design would fail to respect the distinctive architectural character of the area. The dwelling would therefore stand out as an incongruous and discordant feature in the townscape of Gorringe Road. There would be no physical encroachment onto Eastbourne Park, but the development would nonetheless intrude into the attractive views towards this important open space.
8. I conclude that the proposal would fail to harmonise with the character and appearance of the area and it would erode local distinctiveness. There would be conflict with Policies UHT1, UHT4 and HO6 of the Eastbourne Borough Plan 2001-2011 and Policies B2, D1 and D10a of the Eastbourne Core Strategy Local Plan (2013) (ECS). These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) insofar as it seeks good design which is sympathetic to local character and history, including the surrounding built environment. Policy D11 of the ECS would not be infringed, but there would be some limited conflict with Policy C2 which seeks to protect the boundary of Eastbourne Park from inappropriate development.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

9. The Council concedes that it is unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. According to the most recently published Authority Monitoring Report, the current supply figure is 1.43 years. This represents a major shortfall and therefore the benefits of housing delivery attract great weight. Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework states that in circumstances such as this, where the requisite housing land supply does not exist, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
10. The proposal would provide a new self-build dwelling for the appellant's son and it would reduce the maintenance requirement for the garden, thereby enabling the appellant to remain in her current home. These would be clear benefits of granting permission. However, the scheme would also have an unacceptable and lasting adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. This harm would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the very modest improvement to the Council's housing land supply position and the private benefits to the appellant and her son.

11. Accordingly, I find that the proposal conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole. Notwithstanding the housing land supply position, there are no material considerations of such strength as to justify a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.
12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including the scheme's ability to meet minimum space and parking standards and proposals for landscaping, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR