



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 February 2023

by A M Nilsson BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D5120/W/22/3306696

58 Blendon Drive, Bexley, Kent DA5 3AB

- 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 Lavender against the decision of London Borough of Bexley.
 - The application Ref 22/01803/PIP, dated 13 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is an end of terrace two-bedroom two storey house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Application for costs

2. An application for costs was made by Mrs Lavender against the London Borough of Bexley. This application is the subject of a separate Decision.

Preliminary Matters

3. The proposal is for permission in principle. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) advises that this is an alternative way of obtaining planning permission for housing-led development. The permission in principle consent route has 2 stages: the first stage (or permission in principle stage) establishes whether a site is suitable in-principle and the second ('technical details consent') stage is when the detailed development proposals are assessed. This appeal relates to the first of these 2 stages.
4. The scope of the considerations for permission in principle is limited to location, land use and the amount of development permitted¹. All other matters are considered as part of a subsequent Technical Details Consent application if permission in principle is granted. I have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

5. The main issue is whether the site is suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use, the amount of development and its effect on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

6. The appeal site comprises land to the side of 58 Blendon Drive which is a two-storey end of terrace dwelling. It is located in a predominantly residential area where there is a variety of property styles and sizes. The site is adjacent to an

¹ PPG Paragraph: 012 Reference ID: 58-012-20180615

existing terrace of three properties of similar size and design. On the other side of the site is a two-storey detached dwelling. The site currently contains a garage that is attached to, and forms part of, 58 Blendon Drive. The site also currently forms part of the front, side and rear garden of that property.

7. The appeal site is long and narrow, being wider at the front before tapering towards the rear. As a separate plot, its size and shape would be out of character with the general size and shape of the majority of properties in the surrounding area.
8. Due to its narrow width and its location sandwiched between two existing properties, the proposed development would appear cramped and squeezed into the site. It would be out of character with the general pattern of development in the surrounding area in terms of plot size and shape. Although several surrounding properties have been extended to the side, the proposed development would remove the existing gap between no 56 and no 58 Blendon Drive which positively contributes to the spaciousness that exists in the street-scene. Furthermore, unlike the residential extensions that have occurred to the sides of some existing properties, the proposed development would represent the formation of a new dwelling on a separate plot.
9. As Section 70(2)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 engages Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for this type of application, I am required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and any other material considerations, such as the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) (the Framework).
10. I therefore conclude that having regard to its location, the appeal site would not be suitable for the provision of a two-bedroom, two-storey dwelling due to the harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would be contrary to Policies ENV39, H3 and H8 of the Bexley Unitary Development Plan (2004), Policy CS01 of the Bexley Core Strategy (2012) and Policy D3 of the London Plan (2021). These policies require, amongst other things, that residential development in residential areas should be compatible with the character or appearance of the area having regard to the layout and the spaces around buildings, and that where residential development consists of new dwellings to the side of existing dwellings, there should be no adverse impact on the character of the area.

Other Matters

11. Both parties have referred to an appeal decision² that was allowed for a permission in principle development. Although I have been provided with a copy of the decision, I do not have full details of the case to give it significant weight in the decision. From reading the decision, however, it is clear that the site is quite different and there were different matters to consider in that appeal. I have determined this appeal on its own individual planning merits.
12. The Council's reason for refusal refers to Policy CS02 of the Bexley Core Strategy (2012). This policy is a strategic level policy that relates to the defined Bexleyheath geographic region, which the appeal site is not within. This policy is therefore not applicable to the appeal proposal. Additionally, Policy D2 of the London Plan (2021) concerns infrastructure requirements, and there is

² APP/D5120/W/18/3219054

nothing in the appeal proposal that would lead me to find the development contrary to this policy.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

13. The Government's objective as set out in the Framework is to support sustainable housing growth. The proposed development would result in a very small increase in the Council's overall housing number and would be in a sustainable location. It would also bring a number of additional residents to the area who would contribute to the local economy. Collectively, I give these matters moderate weight in favour of the proposed development.
14. However, the harm that the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the area attracts significant weight that outweighs the benefits associated with the proposed development.
15. The proposed development would therefore conflict with the development plan and there are no identified other considerations, including the Framework, that outweigh this conflict.
16. For the reasons set out above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A M Nilsson

INSPECTOR