



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 May 2024

by R Morgan BSc (Hons) MCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th June 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Q4245/W/23/3334401

5 Brentwood Crescent, ALTRINCHAM, Cheshire, WA14 1NW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by St Werburgh Developments against the decision of Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 111062/FUL/23.
 - The development proposed is two semi-detached dwellings and one detached dwelling including rear dormers, amended vehicle access and associated parking and landscaping following demolition of the existing dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's decision letter refers to a policy in the emerging Places for Everyone (Pfe) Plan. This joint development plan has since been adopted. Both parties have had the opportunity to comment on any implications that the change in policy context may have had for the appeal proposal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - i) the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and
 - ii) the effect on the living conditions of the occupiers of 3 Tarran Place, with particular regard to outlook.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located at the head of a short residential cul-de-sac in a suburban area. Most of the properties on this street, and in the surrounding area, are two storey semi-detached houses, but the appeal site is occupied by a bungalow. A further group of nearby bungalows include the property immediately adjacent to the appeal site, at 3 Tarran Place (No. 3).
5. Although some of the houses along Brentwood Crescent have side extensions, reasonable gaps remain between them, and their staggered positioning breaks up the built form. These gaps, and the low form of the bungalows, provide a spacious quality to this short street, which is enhanced by open views to tall trees. This green and spacious quality to Brentwood Crescent contrasts with, and provides relief from, the more built-up character of Gladstone Road.

6. The principle of replacing the existing bungalow on the appeal site with a pair of semi-detached houses has already been established, through planning permission ref 109777/FUL/22. The appeal proposal differs in that it proposes an additional detached house on the site, so that three dwellings would be provided in total.
7. The appeal site is wider than the plots occupied by the existing pairs of semis which front directly onto Brentwood Crescent. This means that, even with three new dwellings, gaps would be retained between the proposed houses and the existing properties on either side. However, the two buildings on the site would be very close to each other, with only a narrow gap between them.
8. To enable accommodation to be provided over three floors, the houses would have deep roofs, with large rear dormers. The new buildings would be slightly higher than the adjacent semi-detached houses, and their overall scale and massing, combined with the narrow gap between the buildings, would contribute to the impression of a substantial bulk of built form on this side of the street, which is currently green and open.
9. The houses would have sufficient space for parking and decent sized rear gardens. Their contemporary design, whilst different from the surrounding older development, would be acceptable in this suburban location. Even so, the proposed replacement of the existing modest bungalow with three houses would result in a much more urban form of development along this part of the street.
10. The density of development would be acceptable in purely numeric terms, and I note the minimum requirements set out in Policy JP-H4 of the PfE Plan. However, Policy JP-H4 accepts that lower densities may be acceptable where they can be justified by any potential impact on the wider townscape. Similarly, the Planning Guidelines for New Residential Development (2004) make clear that higher densities should not be achieved at the expense of the character of the area. In this case, the overall scale, massing and layout of the proposed houses would harmfully erode the green and open aspect to this part of the street.
11. I conclude that the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policies L2 and L7 of the Trafford Local Plan 2012, which require that new development must be appropriate in its context and not be harmful to the character of the immediately surrounding area. There would be a similar conflict with the requirements for sustainable places which respect and acknowledge the character and identity of the locality, contained in Policy JP-P1 of the PfE Plan.

Living conditions

12. The neighbouring property, No. 3, is set within an irregularly shaped plot, with a triangular garden sharing a common boundary with the appeal site.
13. Side driveways would provide a reasonable amount of separation between the proposed detached house and the rear windows of the bungalow at No. 3. The occupant of No. 3 has commented that some of the rear windows do serve habitable rooms, but they would look out towards the front gardens of the new houses or, as present, to the existing single garage.

14. The impact on the outlook from the windows of No. 3 would be acceptable, but the rear part of the new detached house would be very close to the private garden area of the neighbouring bungalow.
15. The proposed houses would be sited to the north of No. 3, so would not result in unacceptable overshadowing. Nonetheless, the introduction of a solid, 2.5 storey gable wall in such close proximity to the shared boundary would appear overbearing from the rear garden area of No. 3. The greatest impact would be on the widest part of the garden, beyond which it narrows to a point. This area of the outdoor amenity space, which is closest to the bungalow, is likely to be the most intensively used, and therefore the most sensitive. The new development would appear overly dominant from the neighbouring garden, with resultant harm to the living conditions of the occupiers.
16. Owing to its height, massing and proximity to the common boundary, the proposed development would have an overbearing impact on the rear garden of No. 3 and would cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of that property. The proposal would conflict with Local Plan Policies L2 and L7, which require that new development must not harm the amenity of the immediately surrounding area or occupants of adjacent properties by reason of overbearing impact. There would also be conflict with PfE Plan Policy JP-P1, which requires developments to provide a high level of amenity.

Other considerations

17. The Council has confirmed that it is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. According to the appellant, the figure is 3.75 years. This is a level of shortfall which needs to be addressed.
18. The scheme would make efficient use of land in an urban location with good access to services and facilities, and the proposed replacement of the existing bungalow with three family sized homes would contribute to meeting local housing needs. However, two houses could already be built on the site in accordance with the existing planning permission, so the additional contribution of one more unit to Trafford's overall housing supply would be small.
19. When compared with the existing planning permission, the economic benefits of the appeal scheme, in terms of construction jobs and demand for local services and facilities by future occupants, would also be limited.
20. For the reasons described above, the appeal scheme would conflict with PfE Plan Policy JP-P1 and Local Plan Policies L2 and L7. These policies are consistent with the design requirements set out in Paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). I therefore give the conflict with these policies significant weight in this appeal.
21. Even taking into account the Framework objective of boosting the supply of housing, the minor benefits to the scheme would not be sufficient to outweigh the harms to the character and appearance of the area and to the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers.
22. Overall, the adverse impacts of the scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.

Conclusion

23. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole, and there are no other material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, which outweigh those findings. Consequently, the appeal is dismissed.

R. Morgan

INSPECTOR