The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 October 2017

by Jonathon Parsons MSc BSc(Hons) DipTP Cert(Urb) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 13th November 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/W/17/3179274
10 Romill Close , West End SO18 3NE

- 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 B Natt against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
- The application Ref C/17/80065, dated 20 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 9 June 2017.
- The development proposed is "the erection of a detached 3 bedroom dwelling on land to the rear of 10 Romill Close with associated access and parking."

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. A payment towards mitigation measures to offset the impact of the development on the Solent and Southampton Water Special Protection Area (SPA) has been made. This has been confirmed by the Council to overcome its reason for refusal relating to this issue.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are (a) whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Gaters Mill and Romill Close - West End Conservation Area, (b) the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, having regard to private outdoor space, and vehicular noise and disturbance

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site is situated to the rear of 10 Romill Close and would be served by an access road off this road alongside No 10. Beyond the rear boundary of the site lies a public open space and a recent housing development. Romill Close lies within the Gaters Mill and Romill Close – West End Conservation Area.

5. Romill Close contains older traditional styled dwellings, many of which have been extended at two storey level to the side. Despite alterations, many of the properties still retain decorated chimney pots, metal lattice windows, solid timber entrance doors, red brick facing material and distinctive hipped pitched roofs. Properties also retain long back gardens which gives a significant sense of spaciousness between these period properties and the more recent housing

behind. It is these historical, architectural and aesthetic qualities which are of significance and importance to the Conservation area and of special interest to it. The dwelling at No 10 has been altered with rendered alterations and UPVC windows. However, it has retained its basic form, forms part of the distinctive row of dwellings along Romill Close and has a long rear garden. As such, the dwelling site makes a positive contribution to the significance of the conservation Area.

6. The proposal would result in a two storey dwelling in a backland position to the rear of the existing row of properties on Romill Close. By reason of its location, it would significantly intrude into the spaciousness present behind these properties. Furthermore, it would be designed with a partial half-hip in contrast to the distinctive hipped roofs of dwellings on Romill Close. Additionally, the first floor render, overhanging roof porch and front room canopy, and fenestration details would be markedly different from the more traditional architectural detailing of the original buildings along Romill Close. The proposal would replace an existing workshop building but the two-storey dwelling, with its domestic sub-division of a plot, would have a far greater visual impact on the neighbouring area, including from public open space and neighbouring properties.

7. There has been a planning permission granted for the demolition of No 2 Romill Close and replacement with two dwellings. However, this permission related to a site at the other end of Romill Close adjacent to the recent housing at Upmill Close. It completed a cluster of dwellings within this development preserving the altered grain of development here. As a consequence, there are differences between this scheme and the appeal proposal. In respect of a development at Marina for four dwellings, little detail has been given but it is understood the permission has expired and therefore negligible weight can be attached to it if cannot be built. In any case, every proposal has to be considered on its particular planning merits.

8. In conclusion, the proposal would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the Conservation Area for the reasons indicated. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to policies 59.BE and 169.LB of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan Review (LP) 2001-2011 (2006), which collectively and amongst other matters, require full and proper account of the context of the site including the character and appearance of the locality or neighbourhood, development to be appropriate in layout and siting, in relation to adjoining buildings, spaces and views, and the proposal to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

9. As paragraph 132 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) makes clear, when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the asset, the greater the weight should be. Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires that special attention shall be paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

10. The harm identified above would be less than substantial and it is necessary in line with paragraph 134 of the Framework that the identified harm is weighed against the public benefits of the proposal. The proposal would result in the

removal of a previously developed site but no other public benefits have been identified. The harm to the Conservation Area's significance would be considerable for the reasons indicated and applying the balance in paragraph 134, I consider that such harm would be of a scale that would outweigh the scheme's benefits.

Living conditions

11. The proposal would result in a small narrow area of private space serving the dwelling at 10 Romill Close. The space would be above the minimum area required by the Council's Quality Places Supplementary Planning Document 2011. However, the shape of the space limits its usefulness to adequately serve the everyday needs of this family sized dwelling, such as children's play space, private recreation area and clothes drying area. In this respect, it would be considerably smaller than other garden areas serving most of the properties along Romill Close.

12. A vehicular access for the proposed dwelling and for one vehicular space associated with the existing dwelling would be provided alongside No 10. Nevertheless, any increase in noise and disturbance would be limited mainly to one dwelling which would not be great enough to cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 10.

13. In conclusion, the development would result in inadequate private outdoor space for the occupants of the existing dwelling. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to policy 59.BE of the LP, which amongst other matters, requires full and proper account of the context of the site, and for development to be appropriate in layout, design and siting.

Other matters

14. In terms of sustainable development under the Framework, there would be economic benefits arising from construction activities involving employment, services and suppliers. In the longer term, the development would support the local economy in terms of the use of shops, services and facilities, and potentially encourage new investment in the locality. Socially, the proposal would boost housing supply in a location with reasonable access to services and facilities and add to the housing mix within the area. Environmentally, energy and water saving measures, and materials sourced from sustainable sources, would be incorporated in the new dwelling.

15. However, the economic and social benefits would be limited by reason of only one dwelling being proposed. Importantly, although less than substantial, there would be harm to a heritage asset under the Framework for which considerable weight is to be attached. There would also be harm to the living conditions of the residents of the existing dwelling. For these reasons, the proposal would not be sustainable development.

16. There would be on-site parking provided for both the existing dwelling and proposed dwelling, and the siting would not adversely affect protected trees. There would be no loss of privacy, outlook or light to the occupiers of neighbouring properties. Security measures and cycle storage would be provided for the new dwelling, and there are no highway objections to the proposal. However, such measures come about in any case with new development so limiting their weight. In summary, the proposal would harm a

heritage asset and the living conditions of the residents of the existing dwelling in conflict with LP policies and the development plan, as a whole. For the reasons indicated, there are no other material considerations to outweigh the conflicts with the development plan.

17. As there are substantive reasons to dismiss this appeal, there is no requirement to assess the nature of mitigation in relation to the impact of the proposal on the SPA.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR