



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 October 2024

by C Butcher BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/W1715/W/24/3339114

17 O'Connell Road, Eastleigh, Hampshire SO50 9GN

- 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 Mr Michael against the decision of Eastleigh Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is F/23/95271.
 - The development proposed is to split land and erect a new 3 bedroom detached dwelling on site of existing workshop/store.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The Council's first reason for refusal relates to a potential loss of outlook from two windows for the occupiers of 17 O'Connell Road. However, I noted on my site visit that these windows have now been permanently blocked up with brickwork. The Council has acknowledged that, should this be the case, this reason for refusal would no longer be of relevance. On that basis, I am satisfied that existing living conditions would be maintained, and I have not considered this matter any further.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of the private garden space associated with No. 17, along with its concrete driveway. O'Connell Road itself is predominantly characterised by the presence of semi-detached or terraced houses that are set back from the road. In combination with the generous gaps between buildings, this provides the street with a spacious feel.
5. The appeal site itself is a narrow plot of land and the proposed dwelling would therefore be sited in very close proximity to the existing homes either side. I recognise that the dwelling would have a similar footprint to others nearby, and that its design would not appear out of keeping when considered in isolation. However, in my view, it is inevitable that it would appear as a very cramped and contrived form of development which would look incongruous within its immediate surroundings, thereby eroding the sense of spaciousness that currently exists.

6. There are examples of new homes that have been built on garden land nearby, including No's. 1a, 2a and 20a Spencer Road. However, it is clear from the plans before me that No's 1a and 2a sit within wider plots than that of the appeal site. Furthermore, despite the proximity, the character of Spencer Road is quite different to that of O'Connell Road. In particular, the built form is tighter knit and less spacious. As a result, all three homes appear as quite natural additions to the street scene. This would not be the case with the appeal proposal.
7. I note that the appellant has submitted amended plans which make several changes to the proposed dwelling, including reducing its width. However, even if I were to accept these plans, the differences are not significant enough to overcome the harm that I have identified.
8. I therefore find that the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would conflict with Policy DM1 of the Eastleigh Local Plan (2016 – 2036), the relevant aspects of which seek to ensure that new development is well designed and that it preserves character and appearance.

Other Matters

9. The Council has noted that several protected sites could be impacted by the proposed development. The appellant has submitted a signed unilateral undertaking in order to address this matter. However, as I am dismissing the appeal I am not required to consider this issue any further.

Conclusion

10. The proposed development conflicts with the development plan when considered as a whole. Whilst the provision of one new dwelling would add to local housing stock, and would also have some economic benefits for the local area, the small-scale nature of the scheme means that any such benefits are likely to be very limited. I also give very little weight to any benefits associated with the removal of the existing dilapidated outbuilding on the site given that the work is not dependent on the outcome of this appeal. Accordingly, there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

C Butcher

INSPECTOR