

Grounds of Appeal



Section 78 Planning Appeal

Appellant Mr S Michael

Site Address 17 O'Connell Road, Eastleigh SO50 9GN

Proposal Demolition of existing outbuilding and erection of detached dwelling

The appellant considers that the appeal scheme is acceptable for the reasons set out in the Design and Access Statement which accompanied the planning application.

The appellant is of course aware of the recently dismissed appeal for similar development APP/W1715/W/24/3339114. But this proposal differs from that scheme in a number of ways which are set out in the Design and Access Statement and this should be determined on its own merits.

The appellant is of the opinion that the previous Inspector has underplayed the benefits of the scheme, namely the provision of a small family dwelling in a well-established neighbourhood accessible to the town centre, many amenities including Fleming Park and local schools, and overplayed the alleged harm to the character and appearance of the area. It is easy to dismiss the benefits as it is just "one house" in the face of the overwhelming need for many more, but of course one house is all each of our families need.

This is a much-altered mid-20th century housing estate not a conservation area and the appellant wonders about the merits of being quite so protective of such an area in the face of the significant need for additional housing - as strongly reflected by the clear aims of the Government. This is exactly the type of accessible residential area which is prime for densification wherever we can, with the benefit that here this will be a house with a private garden rather than flats which so often make up urban densification. The house would add to the variety of house sizes on the estate and be well suited to a first family home or perhaps an older person or couple downsizing to free up a larger family home.

Does such a protective approach taken by the Council planning officer's and previous Inspector reflect local sentiment? The Town Council were happy with both this and the previous proposal. No objections

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from local residents were received which suggested that change to the character of the street or the local area was something they were particularly concerned about. The houses in Spencer Road demonstrate that modern interventions like this can be added in, and, in the context of this estate, it really is not the end of the world. The appellant considers that due to a more conservative design approach the appeal proposal would actually have a less noticeable impact on the street scene than any of the Spencer Road additions (i.e. 1a, 2a and 20a).

The appellant considers that the supposed difference in character between O'Connell Road and Spencer Road described by the previous Inspector (and the Council) has been exaggerated. It can be seen that both streets formed part and parcel of the same development and, setting aside the three new properties, both exhibit very similar spatial characteristics. For example, the distance between facing houses across both streets is more or less the same (e.g. 25.5m between 19 O'Connell Road and 26 O'Connell Road and 26.0m between 4 Spencer Road and 3 Spencer Road). Equally typical gaps between the adjacent blocks in the street is also more or less the same (e.g. 5m between 24 and 26 O'Connell Road and 6m between 6 Spencer Road and 8 Spencer Road).

The Inspector's attention is particularly drawn to the requirements of Local Plan policy DM1 ii in particular the requirement to make efficient use of the site and maximise opportunities to increase density. This of course strongly accords with the present Government's push to vastly increase new housing numbers. It is acknowledged that DM1 goes on to refer to the need to take account of the context and character of the locality, but it is necessary to consider the purpose of such a policy. It is not there to block all change in a locality which does not warrant such a level of protection. This proposal really begs the question if one cannot build a modest and sensible housing proposal here, where can you?