

To / Sukhi Dhadwar
From / Fred Caillat
Date / 8th December 2021
Your ref / EPF/2893/21
Our ref /
File ref / 003450



ADDRESS // LAND AT BENTONS FARM, MIDDLE STREET, BUMBLES GREEN, NAZEING, EN9 2LN
PROPOSAL // ERECTION OF 2NO. SINGLE STOREY TWO BEDROOM DETACHED RESIDENTIAL DWELLINGS
TOGETHER WITH SINGLE GARAGES. EXISTING ACCESS WILL BE UTILIZED FROM OAK TREE CLOSE.

Context

The site stands within the Nazeing and South Roydon Conservation Area; a wide area designated to protect the surviving historic landscape and patterns of settlement, which includes the medieval 'long green' settlements of Middle Street. Although development within this part of the conservation area was rapid in the 20th century, until then, Middle Street consisted of only a handful of properties. Development in the 20th century has predominantly been linear and is characterised by detached properties occupying large plots which front the highway.

Relevant planning history

In 2017, a planning application (EPF/0292/17) was submitted for the erection of 4 no. detached four bedroom residential dwellings on a similar and adjacent site at Bentons Farm. The application was recommended for refusal by officers, but permission was granted at the Area Plan West Committee. The Conservation Team objected to this application as we believed that the general principle of the development would harm the significance of this part of the conservation area which largely derives from open landscape and historic pattern of development. Significantly recessed from the highway it has been considered that the new dwellings would introduce an inappropriate pattern of development with a proposed building line greatly deviating from the existing. We also believed that such development would result in unnecessary and harmful encroachment of unbuilt land.

Early in 2019 an application for the erection of two more dwellings, ref. EPF/0510/19, on the adjoining site, to the east has been refused for the same reasons that were previously raised. In addition, the proposal was found to go even more against the grain of development as it would introduce a cul-de-sac, which is suburban in character, into a rural hamlet setting. In this well established rural context, detached properties, such as proposed, should sit within a large plot. An appeal was lodged and dismissed in October 2019.

In his report the Inspector states that:

"I find the significance of this part of the CA largely derives from its open landscape and historic pattern of development which goes on to cover the majority of the CA.

While I accept that a development within the CA should not be considered unacceptable in principle, it is essential that great weight is given to an assets conservation as stated at paragraph 193 of the Framework. In this instance, although development exists surrounding it, the appeal site nonetheless contributes towards the open landscape that is an important and fundamental character of the CA. The introduction of built development would suburbanise the site, thereby further eroding the open character of the CA.

Moreover, the siting of the dwellings behind existing frontage development would result in a discordant form of development that would be out of keeping with the prevailing character of the area, resulting in additional harm to the CA."

m e m o

In 2020, an application ref, EPF/0897/20 was submitted for the erection of one detached four beds dwelling with associated garage in place of the refused two detached dwellings. The Conservation Team raised objections to the scheme which was refused. An appeal was lodged and dismissed in February 2021.

In his report the Inspector states that:

“17. The previous Inspector stated that the significance of this part of the Conservation Area (the CA) largely derives from its open landscape and historic pattern of development. I agree. It has an open and spacious character due to the loose knit nature of development and the greenery provided by mature landscaping. The prevailing form of development consists of ribbon development fronting the road, and the spaces between the buildings provides views of the surrounding countryside, which contributes to the open character of the area. The undeveloped nature of the appeal site to the rear of the existing built frontage contributes to the open character of the CA.

18. The siting of the proposed dwelling behind the existing frontage development would result in a discordant form of development that would be out of keeping with the prevailing character of the area. The orientation of the proposed dwelling perpendicular to the buildings in Middle Street would further emphasise the incongruous nature of the proposal. Whilst the scale of the proposal would be reduced in comparison to the previous appeal scheme, it would nonetheless suburbanise the site, which would erode the open character of the CA.

19. Having regard to the modest amount of proposed development, I find that the degree of harm to the significance of the CA would be less than substantial. In accordance with paragraph 196 of the Framework, any harm should be weighed against the public benefits.”

The proposal

The current scheme seeks consent for the erection of 2no. single storey two bedroom detached residential dwellings together with single garages.

Given that the context is identical, the reasons for refusal given in references to previously submitted schemes are still considered to be relevant. The proposed scheme raises the same concerns and it is considered that it will cause the same level of harm to the character and appearance of the conservation area. The harm caused was well expressed in reports by the LPA officers and the Inspectors.

Recommendations

It is still considered that the general principle of the development would harm the significance of this part of the conservation area and fail to preserve its special character. We, therefore, OBJECT to this scheme as it is contrary to policies HC6 and HC7 of our Local Plan and Alterations (1998 and 2006), policy DM7 and DM9 of our Submission Version Local Plan (2017), and paragraphs 189, 194, 195, 197, 199 and 206 of the NPPF (2021).

m e m o