

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2016

by Jonathan Price BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI DMS

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

Decision date: 31 May 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/15/3140956

Brooke House, 46 Comptons Lane, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 5NY

- 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 County Gate Properties Brighton Limited against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/15/1627, dated 20 July 2015, was refused by notice dated 30 October 2015.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling and the erection of No 5 4-bed dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The Horsham District Planning Framework (HDPF) was adopted by the Council in November 2015. This replaces the policies of the Horsham District Core Strategy (2007) and Horsham District Council Local Development Framework: General Development Control Policies (2007) to which the Council's original decision on this proposal related. This decision is therefore based on the currently adopted policies of the HDPF.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposals on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is within a suburban residential setting at the corner of Comptons Lane and St Leonards Road. Its principal frontage would be to St Leonards Road where the existing residential character is one of medium-density frontage housing, comprising bungalows and houses of a modern post-war design. The houses nearby are typically of a gable-fronted design, with hung-tile cladding, linked by flat roofed garaging, many with first floor side extensions. These dwellings are generally set back from the adjacent footway, with small gardens or parking areas to the front, to an even building line which this proposal would observe. The housing here is of a design reflecting its era and of a pleasant architectural character.
 5. The five dwellings proposed would be of a contemporary design which would be appropriate for a new development. However, the five detached dwellings
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would be of a markedly contrasting character to that of the housing development opposite and adjacent. They would be higher than the houses on St Leonards Road, and of a very deep plan providing each a substantial mass which, combined with their relatively close arrangement and repetitive design, would contrast with the more varied and open character, and smaller scale, of the nearby development.

6. The scale and mass of the proposed houses, relative to the plots sizes, would result in this proposal appearing cramped in comparison with the surrounding scale and pattern of housing. Although the design for the Plot 5 dwelling would respond to it also having a frontage onto Comptons Lane, the repetition of the designs for the units facing St Leonards Road would result in an overall scheme that would appear visually over-dominant, lack variety and contrast harmfully with the scale and character of the surrounding residential development.
7. Consideration has been given to the examples of other housing developments in the vicinity and elsewhere in Horsham. There is no dispute over the calculations in respect of density per hectare whereby this proposal would be comparable to other nearby developments. However, this proposal must be assessed on its own individual merits. Whilst observing the building line of the mainly two-storey adjacent housing, this serried arrangement of five bulky detached dwellings would appear incongruous in the context of the surrounding housing which, despite the numbers of individual side extensions that have occurred, nonetheless generally retains a more spacious and smaller-scale character.
8. The arrangement, scale and massing of the dwellings proposed would be unsympathetic with the built surroundings and would harm the character and appearance of this area, contrary to the aims of Policies 32 and 33 of the HDPF.

Conclusions

9. Weight has been given to this proposal in making effective use of land to help boost the supply of housing in a sustainable location accessible to daily required services. However, in seeking to secure high quality design the National Planning Policy Framework requires that account be taken of the different roles and character of different areas and states that it is proper to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. This proposal would be out-of-keeping with, and harm, the character and appearance of the surrounding area of housing and, therefore, would not be supported by the general presumption in favour of sustainable development. Consequently I must conclude, having taken into account all other matters that have been raised, that this appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathan Price

INSPECTOR