
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 January 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: 23 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/W/16/3156790

Land to the rear of Roseacre, Station Road, Woldingham, Surrey CR3 7DE

- 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 Charles Safapour (Safland Limited) against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2016/204, dated 11 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of new single storey dwelling and associated works including dropped kerb to access road.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The appeal has been determined on the basis of plan drawing nos 2015/2621/002 Revision C not Revision B.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is to the rear of dwellings on Station Road and is accessed off a single lane track between two properties, Meadow Croft and Roseacre. Within the surrounding area, dwellings are varied in design but they are mainly set within spacious and sylvan frontage plots which give the area a local distinctive and attractive character and appearance.
 5. The proposal would result in a modern designed dwelling and would utilise an existing parcel of land and access track. However the siting of the new dwelling would be to the rear of dwellings fronting onto Station Road and together with the access would represent development in depth. This form of development would be inconsistent with the prevailing form of development along Station road which is of dwellings directly fronting onto the highway. Exceptionally where dwellings are located behind frontage development, they are normally for a number of dwellings served by a shared access driveway which this proposal would differ from by reason of its singular nature. For these reasons, the siting of a single dwelling behind Roseacre would markedly not conform to the pattern of development in the area.
-

6. Although the access track exists, its appearance would change given likely surface treatment improvements due to its unmade nature and necessary alterations to the access point onto the road to meet highway standards, including the build-out of a verge across the road. Together with the visible comings and goings of residents and visitor vehicles, such improvements and alterations would serve to emphasise the inappropriate positioning of the new dwelling in a rearward position behind the road frontage. The width of the new development's frontage would also stand out being noticeably narrower than most other dwellings along Station Road. Furthermore, the existence of a long access between the side boundaries of neighbouring properties would appear incongruous within the context of the mainly frontage style of development. Therefore, despite the limited public glimpses of the dwelling itself, there would be an adverse impact on the appearance and character of the site and its surroundings.
7. By reason of its footprint, the dwelling would spread across much of one half of the site and together with the hard surfaced areas, the development would be extensive and substantial. In comparison, neighbouring dwellings have more spacious plots due to greater and less dispersed garden areas. As a result, the development would appear relatively cramped. Although this would not be apparent from public vantage points, this adverse effect would be visible from surrounding properties. Even at Roseacre, there would be views around the large outbuilding located at the bottom of its garden. In this case, such an adverse impact would not be alleviated by neighbouring garden areas because of the expanse of development on the appeal plot.
8. In conclusion, the development would harm the character and appearance of the area for all these reasons. Accordingly, the proposal would be contrary to policy CSP18 of the Tandridge Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) 2008, policy DP7 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2 Detailed Policies 2014, policies L1 and L2 of the Woldingham Neighbourhood Plan 2016, which collectively and amongst other matters, requires development to reflect and respect existing character, setting and local context within a category 2 Settlement like Woldingham, achieve a high quality design and retain frontage widths of a size prevailing in the area.
9. For similar reasons, the proposal would be contrary to the advice of Woldingham Village Design Statement 2005 because the form of the development would not be appropriate to its location. Additionally, there would be a conflict with the advice of Woldingham Village Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2011 because the proposal would not protect and enhance the high quality character of the area.

Other matters

10. There has been a dismissed appeal for a dwelling on the site. The proposal before me is different in that the dwelling form, siting and access arrangements differ and there have been changes to the national and local planning policy context. Therefore, I have considered the appeal proposal on its own particular planning grounds taking into account the nature of the proposal and latest planning policies.
11. The Appellant's submitted energy report confirms that the installation of solar panels would make a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions in accordance with DPD policy CSP14. The appeal site is also close to a nearby train station with

frequent services, local village shops, sport facilities and a village hall. There would also be biodiversity enhancements as detailed in an ecological report. However I attach significant weight to the impact on the character and appearance of the area because of its locally distinctive nature and the benefits would be limited by reason of one dwelling being created. I conclude the adverse impact would outweigh the benefits when assessed against the National Planning Policy Framework and the development would not be sustainable.

12. My attention has been drawn to a 2012 allowed appeal at Whiteoaks where a dwelling was to be created behind another. However, the dwelling was to be accessed off a shared drive of other backland dwellings in similar sized plots. In a 2011 dismissed appeal for a dwelling at Cedar Cottage, an Inspector considered that dwelling was not cramped because of the substantial size of the gardens of neighbouring properties. Nevertheless, the proposal was for a replacement dwelling in Southdown Road and was dismissed on the grounds of its overly assertive nature due to its massing close to the road. Therefore, there are sufficient reasons to distinguish these appeals from that before me and as previously indicated every appeal proposal has to be considered on its merits.

Conclusion

13. Having regard to the above and to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jonathon Parsons

INSPECTOR