
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 21 February 2017

by David Cliff BA Hons MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3rd April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L1765/W/16/3161913

Land at Stoke Charity Road, Kings Worthy, Hampshire

- 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 Stephen Carrington against the decision of Winchester City Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01418/FUL, dated 16 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single dwellinghouse (Class C3).
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether the proposed development is of an exceptional quality or innovative nature of design that justifies its location in the open countryside, having regard to paragraph 55 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework).

Reasons

3. It is agreed by both parties that the appeal site is located within the open countryside and that the proposed dwellinghouse would not accord with the criteria set out in Policy MTRA4 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy 2013 (Local Plan Part 1).
 4. Paragraph 55 of the Framework states that new isolated homes in the countryside should be avoided unless there are special circumstances such as the exceptional quality or innovative nature of the design of the dwelling. Such a design should be truly outstanding or innovative, helping to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas, reflect the highest standards in architecture, significantly enhance its immediate setting, and be sensitive to the defining characteristics of the local area.
 5. The appellant has sought to reinterpret an iron-age round house, but with a modern story telling twist. The resulting design of the dwelling house comprises a number of circular rooms, connected by semi-subterranean tunnels, including different roof covers, and all set out in a manner that seeks to draw upon the earliest form of settlement.
 6. The generally low profile form of the design and the separation between different parts of the dwellinghouse would result in it appearing as a modest
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- and fairly unobtrusive building within its landscaped setting. The separated but linked rooms of the proposal would differentiate it from many other new single dwellinghouses though not to such a degree as to result in it offering any particular architectural innovation.
7. The different roof elements would be the most visible features. However, whilst they are proposed to be clad in different materials, I am not persuaded that the overall design approach, use of materials and resulting development would amount to the highest standard of architecture.
 8. The appellant refers to local round houses recreated at Buster Hill. However, from the information provided in this respect, they appear to be significantly different from the appearance of the proposed development which incorporates rendered finish and large glazed gable frontages. They also appear to be located in a different setting to the appeal proposal. I do not consider that the inspiration drawn from them nor the aim of reinterpreting historic iron age settlements results in an outstanding or innovative design approach in this instance.
 9. The resulting dwellinghouse would be of an interesting and considered design and I acknowledge the process that the appellant has undertaken in evolving the design of the proposal. However in my view the proposed design, whilst having some design merit, is not of such outstanding value or distinction to qualify as being of the exceptional quality or innovative nature sought by the Framework.
 10. To a limited extent the proposed development could help to raise standards of design more generally in rural areas, though this does not outweigh my findings on the other relevant criteria in paragraph 55 of the Framework.
 11. The generally low profile design and integration into the surrounding landform demonstrates some sensitivity to the defining characteristics of the surrounding area as set out in the appellant's Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment. Much of the development would be screened by boundary vegetation though the appearance of the roofs clad in different materials would in my view be at odds with the immediate setting of the site. I do not consider that the overall appearance of the development including the proposed landscaping would meet the Framework's aim of significantly enhancing its immediate setting.
 12. Measures such as re-establishing chalk grassland, providing opportunities for domestic food production, using site materials to provide retaining structures and enclosures and other sustainability measures are all positive, though they are not particularly unusual or of a very significant benefit in overall design terms. I have therefore given them only minimal weight in the assessment of the proposals against paragraph 55 of the Framework.
 13. Whilst the proposal has sought to respond positively to policies CP13 and DS1 of the Local Plan Part 1 and the Design Guidelines set out in the Kings Worthy and Abbots Worthy Village Design Statement, the Council has not raised objection in relation to these and I do not consider that compliance with them means that a proposal would also necessarily go on to comply with the particular and specific design criteria as set out in Paragraph 55 of the Framework.

Conclusion

14. It is agreed by the parties that the proposed development would be contrary to policy MTRA4 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy 2013.
15. For the reasons set out above, I do not consider that the proposed development would be of the exceptional quality or innovative nature of design sought by paragraph 55 of the Framework.
16. The proposal is contrary to the Local Plan and material considerations do not indicate that the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
17. For the above reasons, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Cliff

INSPECTOR