
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 March 2017

by Jonathan Hockley BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/T0355/W/16/3162450

Lime Tree Lodge, London Road, Sunningdale, Ascot SL5 0JN

- 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 & Mrs Dudley Mills against the decision of Council of the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - The application Ref 16/02358, dated 15 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is 4 No. dwellings formed of 2 pairs of semi-detached houses with basement, associated parking and amenity space following demolition of existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background and Main Issue

2. The appeal site has a detailed history, with a scheme granted consent in 2013, an appeal dismissed in 2015 and most recently an appeal granted consent in 2016 (the 2016 consent). The most recent appeal allowed 2 pairs of semi-detached dwellings and associated parking, garages and amenity space. The current scheme seeks to amend the design to eliminate the need for a full basement construction and alters the roof design. Detailing of the proposal is also consequently altered. The Council dismissed the application that is the subject of this appeal considering that the design would have a more urban form and be bulkier than the approved scheme.
3. The main issue in this case therefore is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. Lime Tree Lodge is the end residential house is a ribbon of development located on the north side of London Road; immediately to the left of the site is an access road to a car park for the village, with offices located on the other side of this road. The site is therefore adjacent to the fringes of the commercial centre of Sunningdale, but is very well screened from most vantage points by substantial planting, much of it evergreen. A gap in the middle of this planting allows the existing single storey property to be seen from the road and the flats opposite.
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5. A townscape assessment¹ defines the area as 'leafy residential suburbs', which is described as low density residential suburbs comprising large detached houses in spacious irregular well treed plots, typically dating from the early 20th Century to the present day. The type is defined by large properties set well back from the road, behind dense/high ornamental hedges often with gravel drives and gates.
6. The site lies on the edge of this area; the size and nature of the site, as a detached house located in a large area clearly belongs to the leafy residential suburbs character area, but its direct proximity to the village centre means that the site represents the edge of the character area and signifies the change in character from the village centre to the suburbs to the east from the village centre.
7. The 2016 consent presents two pairs of semi-detached dwellings. The properties would have parapet wall hipped roofs with a noticeable columned flat roofed portico serving the paired entrance doors, with a protruding chimney at either end. The scheme in this case provides for a gabled roof (appearing similar from the front) but removes the chimneys. The slightly redesigned portico is lifted up to allow the basement to be set higher; as a consequence steps are incorporated up to the front of the properties. The ridge of the roof is set at a similar level but previous spacing between upper floor windows and the eaves of the property has largely gone in the new scheme, and two dormer windows are set noticeably higher in the roof than the 2016 consent.
8. I note that the scheme before me has a reduction in roof area to the flanks and provides for a more articulated roof form. This would be more interesting and varied. However, and notwithstanding the existing screening, proposed garages and submitted impression of the visible frontage of the scheme, I am not convinced that the façades of the building would be improved. The steps to the front of the properties would appear significantly more urban in design, giving the appearance of townhouses with individual staircases and basements. Whilst the site lies on the edge of the character area of the leafy residential suburb, such an impression would appear out of place within the immediate area; whilst I noted the apartment building on the opposite side of the street has steps up to an entrance, this building has a considerably harder frontage and is in a separate character area.
9. Furthermore, I do not consider that the scheme would appear as two storey properties with dormers in the roof; whilst the basements would be hidden by walls, the siting of the steps would make it clear that four floors of development was present on the site, making the proposal appear denser and more dominant than the approved scheme – even if the dormers were replaced by roof lights, as the appellant suggests. Moreover, the compression between the first floor windows and the eaves of the building would appear cramped in form, and this element would likely remain visible from the street despite the extensive screening to the plot.
10. The Council cannot demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable housing land. In such circumstances the National Planning Policy Framework states that housing applications should be considered in the context of sustainable development, with relevant policies for the supply of housing not considered up

¹ Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Townscape Assessment June 2010

to date. However, the Framework makes it clear that the Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment and states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. I consider that for the reasons given above the proposal would not therefore constitute sustainable development. Moreover, the scheme would provide the same benefits for the area in terms of housing units that the existing consent would provide for.

11. I therefore conclude that the proposal would have an adverse effect on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, and would be contrary to policies H10 and DG1 of the Local Plan², as well as policies NP/DG1.1 and NP/DG3 of the Neighbourhood Plan³. When taken together these policies state that new residential schemes will be required to display high standards of design, and be compatible with and respond positively to the established street façade and townscape.
12. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Jon Hockley

INSPECTOR

² The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Local Plan 1999, incorporating alterations June 2003

³ Ascot, Sunninghill & Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan 2011-2026, April
