
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 April 2017

by Grahame Gould BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 27th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/16/3165178

Little Thatch, Veras Walk, Storrington RH20 3JF

- 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 Property Sphere Limited against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/16/1252, dated 1 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as 'construction of a new single storey dwelling to the land to the rear of the property known as Little Thatch and the creation of a new vehicular access off Veras Walk. The scheme also includes the demolition of the existing detached garage and construction of a new detached garage to Little Thatch.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The development would involve the siting of a bungalow within the rear garden of Little Thatch. To facilitate pedestrian and vehicular access to the new dwelling it would be necessary to demolish Little Thatch's garage. The scheme also includes the provision of a replacement double garage that would be sited to the south west of the existing dwelling.
 4. Little Thatch is a bungalow of a bespoke design that occupies a quite large plot. Veras Walk is a private street, amongst others within Heath Common, and it is characterised by dwellings of varying types and sizes within a sylvan setting. The pattern of the development in this area is an informal one, with the majority of the dwellings having been sited so that they front directly onto the street or the shared drive they adjoin. For the most part Veras Walk has been developed at a low density, with there being a significant degree of space between individual properties and their boundaries. The area is therefore spacious in character, although in places there are limited gaps between some of the properties.
 5. The new bungalow would be sited behind Little Thatch and the immediately neighbouring property to the north, Pinehurst. The size and siting of the new property would mean that it would markedly reduce the amount of space
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between Little Thatch and Pinehurst and I consider that this aspect of the development would mean that it would not be respectful of its context. While the bungalow would have a floor area that would be compatible with the other dwellings in the area that aspect of this development would not address the tightness of the siting relationship that there would be between the new bungalow, Little Thatch and Pinehurst.

6. The bungalow would be of a contemporary design and it would have a very angular and relatively squat form, which would be accentuated by the inclusion of an extensive flat roof. While the dwellings in the area are of varied designs, for the most part they are of a traditional vernacular and have pitched roofs and the appearance of the development would be at odds with that vernacular. Laneside, while having a very modern vernacular, is a dwelling that I found to be well proportioned and respectful of its surroundings. I consider that the appearance of the development would not be comparable with Laneside.
7. While the replacement garage would be sited in front of Little Thatch, it would be of a design that would be in sympathy with its surroundings and it would largely be screened from view by the established front boundary planting. I therefore consider that the siting and design of the replacement garage would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Although the development would involve alterations being made to the access arrangements for Little Thatch, including some vegetation removal, I consider that those changes would not be harmful to the streetscene.
8. While the new bungalow would not be readily seen from the street and the sylvan character of the area would be maintained, those factors do not persuade me that the bungalow's siting and design would be acceptable.
9. I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. There would therefore be conflict with Policies 32 and 33 the Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) of 2015 because the development would have a layout and appearance that would not be in sympathy with the distinctiveness of its surroundings. Given the harm that I have identified I consider that there would be conflict with paragraphs 60 and 65 of the National Planning Policy Framework because the development would not promote or reinforce local distinctiveness and would not be of a good design for the area.

Other Matter

10. While concern has been raised about the vehicular movements associated with the development, as the appeal is to be dismissed for other reasons I consider it is unnecessary for me to make any detailed comments about this matter.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Grahame Gould

INSPECTOR