
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 May 2017

by David Troy BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 17 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/16/3164895
Highfield, 161 Bury Road, Bury RH20 1NY

- 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 Neil Coughtrey against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
 - The application Ref SDNP/16/04313/FUL, dated 29 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of a replacement dwelling revised scheme to that granted under SDNP/15/05945/FUL.
-

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 appeal site comprises of two stationary mobile homes and a two storey dwelling and detached garage currently under construction on a spacious corner plot on the eastern side of the A29 Bury Road and south side of the A29 Beacon Hill. The appeal site is located within a rural location set back at a slightly lower level than the road at the front behind a mature landscape boundary and fence. This is further enhanced by the presence of mature landscaping and established trees within the surrounding countryside at the front and rear of the site that adds to the verdant rural character and appearance of the area.
 4. Planning permission has been granted for a replacement dwelling with detached garage, which on my site visit I observed had been substantially carried out. The proposal would involve the redesign of the two storey dwelling including alterations to the front porch, fenestrations, installation of dormer windows to front and rear of the dwelling to serve a new loft room and the raising of the roof. The ridge height of the pitched roof would be increased by 900mm, with a small increase in the eaves height. The site has been excavated so that that the ridge height of the proposal would be about 500mm higher than the original two storey dwelling that previously occupied the site and the recently approved replacement dwelling. A new front dormer would also be installed to serve a loft space above the detached garage.
-

5. Although it would have a comparable ridge height to the original and the approved dwelling on the site, the increased ridge and eaves heights combined with the lower site levels would result in a building with a greater visual bulk. The installation of dormer windows would introduce greater visual clutter to the front and rear roof planes as compared to those in the approved dwelling. These shortcomings would be exacerbated by the proposal's prominent position, which would be visible from a number of public vantage points along busy A29 road. As such, I consider the development, by virtue of its design, scale and bulk, would result in an incongruous and out-of-keeping addition that would adversely harm the rural character and appearance of the area and would fail to preserve or enhance the landscape and scenic beauty of the South Downs National Park.
6. I have considered the appellant's argument that the scale and design of the proposed development would be in keeping with both the original and the recently approved dwelling on the site and other dwellings in the area. I also note the appellant's comments regarding the screening provided by the mature landscaping and boundary treatment, additional landscaping approved and the amendments to the design of the front dormer during the application process. Whilst the use of matching materials, fenestrations and the boundary treatment would assist in integrating the proposal with the area, these aspects do not overcome the adverse effects outlined above. The approved landscaping would take some years to grow before the positive benefits were fully effective.
7. I have considered the appellant's comments regarding the context provided in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and the local planning policies for good design, that planning decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styling and should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative in design and the importance of considering the local character and its setting in the landscape. However, I find that the proposed dwelling does not achieve the standards the Framework and the local policies seek. I also note the benefits to the appellant from the additional accommodation created by the proposal. However, such circumstances are material considerations to which I can attach only limited weight in making this decision.
8. Consequently, I conclude that the development would adversely harm the character and appearance of the area and as such would conflict with Saved Policies RE1, BE11, BE14 and H12 of the Chichester District Local Plan First Review 1999, which I consider relevant in this case. These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that the design, scale, materials, siting and layout of new development does not impact on the landscape and that replacement dwellings do not detract from the rural character and appearance of the surrounding area.
9. In addition, it would not accord with the aims of the Framework that development should seek to secure a high quality of design (paragraph 17); that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development (paragraph 56); that respects the local character (paragraph 58); protects and enhances valued landscapes (paragraph 109); and conserves the landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks (paragraph 115).

Other matters

10. I note that the appellant considers that the proposal would constitute a sustainable form of development. Sustainable development is identified as having social, economic and environmental roles in the Framework. The appellant states the proposal would support the delivery of housing in the area and the redevelopment of the previous residential site. However, while I note the appellant's view that the scheme's design and landscaping would amount to environmental benefits, I have found above that taken overall the development would harm the area's character and appearance. This harm would conflict with the environmental dimension of sustainable development and, in my view, would be sufficient to outweigh the scheme's benefits. The proposal would not therefore amount to sustainable development in the terms of the Framework.
11. I have noted the objections from Bury Parish Council regarding the proposal. However, in light of my findings on the main issue of the appeal, my decision does not turn on these matters.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Troy

INSPECTOR