
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 July 2017

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/W/17/3169525

The Pine Place, Lagness Road, Runcton PO20 1QA

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Tebbitt against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref NM/16/03884/OUT, dated 28 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 23 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is construction of 4 no. dwellinghouses and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The application was submitted in outline, with the matter of access for consideration. The matters of appearance, layout, scale and landscaping are reserved for future consideration. The appellant has submitted drawings showing indicative proposed front elevations. Proposed block and site plans have also been submitted. Although these are not annotated as being indicative, they are clarified as being such within the appellants' submissions. I have determined the appeal on that basis.
3. The Council's second reason for refusal relates to the failure to make an appropriate contribution towards measures to mitigate any potential adverse effect of the proposal on the integrity of the Pagham and Chichester and Langstone Harbours Special Protection Area. A planning obligation has now been provided and the Council has confirmed that this resolves its concerns. As I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to consider the obligation any further.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

5. The existing house on the site occupies a large plot and sits in a location surrounded by other detached dwellings within varying but generally fairly large plot sizes, particularly in respect of those fronting Lagness Road and Goodwood Gardens. Although some of those existing houses are in fairly close

proximity to each other, there is no particular uniformity in that respect and due to their fairly large and wide plots, the development pattern exhibits a pleasing sense of spaciousness. The site itself is not clearly visible from Goodwood Gardens due to intervening vegetation. Its spaciousness is therefore seen more distinctly in the context of Lagness Road, including those other dwellings fronting that road and the rear of properties fronting Goodwood Gardens. The upper parts of the latter are visible over the rear boundary vegetation and fence screening bordering Lagness Road.

6. It is indicated on the plans that the proposed dwellings would occupy relatively narrow plots compared with those in the vicinity either side of the site. Furthermore, although it is intended that each dwelling would be set at least one metre from their shared boundaries, within the local context they would be noticeably closer to each other than those neighbouring dwellings, albeit with acceptable degrees of separation from those existing either side. It would therefore appear as an uncharacteristically cramped form of development. Compared with the extant permission for three dwellings on the site, the combination of the narrower plots and closer spacing would also represent a materially less spacious layout.
7. The dwellings would be set well back from the front boundary, but from the street, in front of the site and close approaches, it is likely that they would still be seen through or over the front boundary vegetation to varying degrees. That vegetation could also not be relied upon on an ongoing basis for providing screening or softening of the proposed dwellings in terms of its maintenance or survival.
8. It is indicated on the submitted elevation drawings that the proposed dwellings would have different designs, with those in the centre being slightly higher and including half hipped roofs to reduce the massing effect. However, that degree of variation and use of appropriate materials would be insufficient to deflect materially from the contradiction that would be caused with the existing spacious settlement pattern in the vicinity of the site, having regard to dwelling spacings. As such, the proposed dwellings would represent jarring and incongruous features of the Lagness Road streetscene.
9. I have had regard to the proposed density of development being below the 35 dwellings per hectare broadly considered appropriate by the Council as set out in the supporting text relating to policy 33 of the Chichester Local Plan: Key Policies (the Local Plan). It is also claimed that it would be of comparable density to the wider context of North Mundham and Runcton. Notwithstanding this, and importantly, I have considered the proposal in relation to the specific local context in the vicinity of the site referred to above. In that respect, I also note the appellants' acknowledgement that the proposed density would be slightly higher than that of existing development immediately surrounding the site.
10. Although there are other parts of the village, such as in Mill Lane, where there are dwellings in similar close proximity to those proposed, the circumstances of their location, relationships and design are not directly comparable to those relating to the appeal proposal.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude on this issue that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to policy 33 of the Local Plan

which requires new residential development to, amongst other things, respect and where possible enhance the character of the surrounding area and site. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which in paragraph 17 states that planning should, amongst other things, take account of the different roles and character of different areas and in section 7 relates to requiring good design.

Conclusion

12. The Framework sets out that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development and indicates that to achieve that, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.
13. The proposal would be in a sustainable location in respect of being sited within the confines of the village settlement. It would also have the benefit, albeit small due to relating to a net addition of just three dwellings, of adding to the local housing supply. However, these factors would not outweigh the unacceptable harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such it would not be a sustainable form of development.
14. Therefore, for the above reasons, and taking account of all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR