The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 August 2017

by J Ayres BA Hons, Solicitor

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

Decision date: 23rd August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C1760/W/17/3173838
Larkfield, Drove Road, Chilboton SO20 6AD

- 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 David Parry against the decision of Test Valley Borough Council.
- The application Ref 16/03121/FULLN, dated 12 December 2016, was refused by notice dated 10 March 2017.
- The development proposed is a two storey detached house and detached garage at the Paddock, Drove Road, Chibolton, Hampshire SO20 6AD.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area having particular regard to the overarching strategy for development in the District, and planning policies relating to the countryside.

Reasons

3. Policy COM2 of the Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan 2016 (TVBRLP) establishes a settlement hierarchy where the amount and location of new housing is related to the availability of facilities and services in order to achieve a sustainable pattern of development. Chibolton is classified as a Rural Village, and therefore development is restricted in recognition of its limited sustainability credentials, and should be located within the settlement boundary of the village. Accordingly development would only be permitted by the TVBRLP if it were deemed to appropriate in accordance with the relevant TVBRLP policies referred to in Policy COM2, or if it were essential for the proposal to be located in the countryside.

4. The proposal would not comply with the policies referred to in COM2. The settlement boundary was re-affirmed as part of the adoption of the TVBRLP in 2016 and I have no evidence to suggest that it is essential for the proposal to be located in the countryside. Moreover, the Council is able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply and I attach significant weight to the TVBRLP.

5. The appeal site is an open paddock, situated on Drove Road which is a small ribbon of residential development. Although a number of the properties have been redeveloped, they generally occupy large, spacious plots, which provide

gaps between the properties and gives a distinct rural feel to the area. I do not agree that the appeal site is the only gap in development and that the proposal would be an infill development. There are parts of Drove Road where considerable space is left between properties, furthermore the large plot sizes and siting of the properties provides a number of gaps in the built form, all of which contribute to the rural character of the area.

6. Drove Road feels more akin to a wide country lane than a road. The location of the built residential form along only one side of the road enhances this countryside feel, and the change in character from rural to village is starkly apparent when travelling along Drove Road into the more built up part of the village. The openness of the appeal site enhances the rural feel of this area, and the addition of a further dwelling at this point would serve to diminish this rural feel, creating a more urbanised setting when travelling along the road, which would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.

7. Policy COM2 acknowledges that any proposal away from the defined settlement boundary would need to demonstrate that the overall social and economic benefits would outweigh the disadvantages of a location which is relatively remote from facilities. The appellant has asserted that the proposal represents sustainable development. The Framework makes clear that sustainable development comprises economic, social and environmental dimensions and that the planning system performs a number of mutually dependant roles. The appeal proposal would provide some economic benefits through employment during the construction period and spending within the local economy by new occupiers thereafter.

8. However, the development would be outside of the defined settlement boundary of a village that is recognised in the TVBRLP as relatively remote from facilities and restricted with regards to new development. In order to access most facilities and services it would be necessary to travel to one of the neighbouring settlements. Whilst the TVBRLP does not entirely prevent new development in rural villages, it limits it through the application of its spatial strategy, to deliver housing land of the right type in the right place.

9. I conclude that the harm identified to the character and appearance of the area means that the proposal would fail to result in improvements in the quality of the built and natural environment. Therefore notwithstanding the benefits of the proposal in respect of its contribution to the local economy, it would not constitute sustainable development taken as a whole.

10. Consequently, I find that the proposal would not be located within the settlement boundary, and consider that the proposal would not provide overall social and economic benefits that would outweigh the disadvantages of its location. As such it would fail to comply with Policy COM2 of the TVBRLP with regards to the overarching strategy for the delivery of housing. The proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area by introducing additional built form at this location. It would therefore conflict with Policy E2 of the TVBRLP with regards to preserving and enhancing the landscape character of the area.

Other Matters

11. I note that the parties agree that the proposal would be acceptable with regards to its impact on neighbouring properties, highways, ecology and trees. However, this does not lead me to a different conclusion. I have found that the proposal would fail to comply with the TVBRLP and the Framework, and would cause harm to the character of the area, and these factors are not outweighed by other material considerations.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above, and taking into account all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

J Ayres

INSPECTOR