



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 April 2018

by S M Holden BSc MSc CEng MICE TPP FCIHT MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27th April 2018

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/17/3189601

2 Foxfield Cottages, Southwater RH13 9EP

- 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 Tony Fan against the decision of Horsham District Council.
 - The application Ref DC/17/1694, dated 28 July 2017, was refused by notice dated 25 September 2017.
 - The development proposed is development of a single 4-bed cottage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Foxfield Cottages is a well-established residential area of two-storey semi-detached and terraced properties set in good-sized plots. The gardens are mature and there is extensive vegetation and landscaping which contribute to the area's spacious and verdant appearance. No 2 is a semi-detached dwelling occupying a prominent corner plot at the junction of Foxfield Cottages with Shipley Road. The appeal site is an area of land to the side of No 2, although it has been separated from what remains of its garden by a close-boarded fence.
4. The site is at a point on Shipley Road where there is a distinct change to its character due to its location at the southernmost edge of Southwater. To the north of the junction with Foxfield Cottages the houses are separated from the road by a footway and grass verge as well as the front gardens, which are enclosed by low level hedges and fences. A row of mature trees also marks the roadside boundary. By contrast to the south of the junction there are grass verges but no footways. The road is predominantly enclosed by more substantial, mature hedges and trees. There are three dwellings nearby, all of which are set well back from the street frontage. The appeal site therefore contributes to the semi-rural appearance of the area at the edge of the village.
5. At present the front corner of No 2 and the front elevations of Reksley Tanglwood align with one another along this stretch of Shipley Road. However, the entire footprint of the proposed dwelling would project beyond this building line and its flank wall would be close to the highway boundary. The dwelling would be visible when looking in either direction along Shipley Road as it would project above the hedges that currently enclose the site. It

would therefore fail to relate satisfactorily to the surrounding development. Even if the boundary hedges were retained and managed more effectively they are not permanent features that would completely screen the dwelling from view. In any event, the purpose of landscaping is to integrate a development into its setting, not to hide a building that is otherwise unacceptable. These factors demonstrate that the proposal would appear intrusive and harmful, introducing built form into an area that is an important part of the transition between the built up area of the village and the countryside to the south.

6. I accept that the appeal site is of a comparable size to others in the locality. However, the siting and scale of the proposed dwelling, its proximity to the boundaries, and the requirement to provide parking for both dwellings within the front garden, would result in the development appearing out of proportion with the size of the plot. Furthermore, the permanent sub-division of the garden of No 2 to create the plot would leave the donor property with a garden that is considerably smaller than others in the vicinity. The resultant layout as a whole would be out of keeping with the more spacious pattern of development which characterises the surrounding area. I therefore consider that the proposal would result in a harmful loss of openness and a development that would appear cramped on this prominent corner plot.
7. For these reasons I conclude that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Planning Framework. These policies, amongst other things, seek high quality development that respects its context and relates sympathetically to the surrounding area.

Conclusions

8. The Government is seeking to significantly boost the supply of housing and requires applications for housing development to be considered in the context of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. As the site lies within the built-up area of Southwater, there is no objection in principle to a residential development. The determining factor is whether or not the proposal can be accommodated without harm to the local environment.
9. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide an additional dwelling and would not harm the living conditions of neighbours. Adequate access and parking arrangements could be secured by conditions, if the scheme had been acceptable in all other respects. However, these positive aspects of the scheme and the limited benefit arising from the provision of a single dwelling do not outweigh the harm that I have identified to the local environment. There are therefore no material considerations, including the advice set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, that outweigh the conflict with the development plan.
10. For this reason, and having regard to all other relevant matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Sheila Holden

INSPECTOR