



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 June 2019

by Hilary Orr MSc, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 20 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/W/19/3223522

Autumn Lodge, Springfield Rd, Camberley GU15 1AB

- 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 Paul Bardini against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 18/0419, dated 14 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2018.
 - The development proposed is the erection of detached two storey-two bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issues are:
 - The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area; and
 - The effect of the development on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Autumn Lodge is sited on the north side of Springfield Road which is a largely unmade road. The area is generally residential and comprises large detached dwellings set in very generous landscaped gardens. The dwellings are of various architectural designs and are generally set well back from the road down long access drives giving the area a very pleasant open and spacious character.
4. The appeal site is located in the rear garden of Autumn Lodge and Camberley Heath Golf Club lies immediately to the rear of the garden. Residential properties, known as Maraval and Hamilton House, flank the appeal site. There is significant tree and shrub screening between the site and the neighbouring properties, with an established tree line to the rear between the site and the golf course. Autumn Lodge sits comfortably within the prevailing pattern of development.

5. The proposed contemporary dwelling would be sited in the rear garden, with its access between the property known as Maraval and Autumn Lodge. I note that the proposal does not include the creation of a new access. The proposed new dwelling would utilise an existing access between Maraval and the host property. The plot would be divided, to provide amenity space for both dwellings with parking to the front of the proposed dwelling.
6. My attention has been drawn to a previous refused application that was dismissed on appeal (APP/D3640/A/11/2165061) on 28 May 2012. This appeal was for two dwellings and garages and the formation of a new access.
7. The current appeal materially differs from that previously dismissed. This proposal is for a single dwelling, rather than two, with the detached garage omitted.
8. I recognise that the proposed dwelling would be fairly well screened from the road by the donor property. However, whilst I recognise that the access proposed differs from the previous scheme, in that both properties would share the access to the existing double gates. I also acknowledge that it would be of a plastic cell construction that would allow grass to grow through. This would to some limited degree mitigate its visual impact. Nonetheless, it would be the sole access for the second dwelling and would therefore be well used. This increased usage would undoubtedly make the access more apparent than at present. Its siting between the host dwelling and Maraval would draw attention to the proposed dwelling in this back garden location. Overall in my judgement the access would lead to an erosion of the current spacious appearance of Autumn Lodge.
9. The site is located within the 'wooded hills' character area as defined within the Western Urban Area Character, supplementary planning document (2012). This, together with the Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017), emphasises the need for new development to respect, enhance and have regard to, distinctive patterns of development, and take opportunities to add to the positive features of the area. I find that the proposed dwelling would fail to observe this guidance, due to its position behind the host property which is untypical of the area. The sub division of the plot would result in plot sizes that are unusual for the area, leading to an erosion of the pleasant spacious open character of Autumn Lodge and the wider area.
10. I have had regard to the level of tree and shrub screening to the boundaries of Autumn Lodge. However, there is no guarantee that this would remain permanently, and screening does not mitigate the harm I have already identified.
11. I find that the proposed new dwelling would result in an incongruous form of rear garden development that fails to respect and enhance the character and quality of the area. Consequently, it would result in significant and demonstrable harm to the character and appearance of the area. the proposed development would therefore be contrary to policies CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (2012).

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

12. The Habitat Regulations¹ 2017 require an assessment to be undertaken as to whether a proposal would be likely to have a significant effect on the interest features of a protected site. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (TBH SPA) is such a protected site. The appeal site lies within five kilometres of the TBH SPA and the proposal would provide a net increase in occupancy. Therefore, the development has the potential to cause harm to the TBH SPA. However, as I have already identified, significant harm to the character and appearance of the area, such that the appeal should be dismissed there is no need to consider this further.

Other matters

13. I understand the Appellants' desire to live in a modern eco-friendly property within a more manageable garden. Nevertheless, this is not sufficient to justify granting planning permission or to allow the appeal.
14. My attention has also been drawn to nearby development at Woodland. I have little evidence before me to confirm the planning history or circumstances for this site. The previous Inspector acknowledged differences between the access points for the two developments and those concerns remain with the current scheme. In any event, I have to determine this appeal on its own planning merits, and its presence would not justify granting this appeal.
15. The provision of one dwelling would make a limited, but nevertheless positive contribution to the housing supply. However, the impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh this benefit when assessed against planning policies.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Hilary Orr

INSPECTOR

¹ The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (The Habitats Regulations)