



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 August 2019

by Roy Curnow MA BSC(Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5 September 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/19/3230920

Dormer Cottage, The Chase, Kingswood KT20 6HY

- 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 Graeme Skipper (Fulcrum Designs Ltd) against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00246/F, dated 6 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 17 April 2019.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing dwelling, detached garage and outbuildings. Erection of 2 No 2½ storey dwellings with integral garages.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The appeal was arranged as an Access Required Site Visit, where the Inspector would be met by the appellant or his representative. No-one was at the property at the time of my visit. However, I was able to adequately see the site from the road and the property's front garden for the purposes of my assessment and undertook this on an unaccompanied basis.
3. I have added the word 'dwellings' to the second sentence of the description of the proposed development, above. The evidence clearly shows that the omission of this word was accidental, and no party is prejudiced by its addition.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect that the proposed development would have on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. Dormer Cottage is a thatched dwelling that has accommodation over two floors. It is a characterful dwelling located on The Chase, an attractive semi-rural estate that is located within The Warren and The Glade Residential Area of Special Character (RASC).
6. Although there are some exceptions to this, the prevailing form of development on The Chase is of large detached dwellings set back from the road within spacious plots, with wide road frontages. This is especially the case on the north side of the road in the vicinity of, and including, the appeal site. Here, trees to the rear of the dwellings provide them with a sylvan setting. The nearby cul-de-sac development at Gledhow Wood, on the south side of The

Chase, has a different form; however, overall, the area has a spacious character and appearance that adds greatly to its local distinctiveness.

7. Reference has been made by the Kingswood Residents' Association to percentage plot coverages in the area. Whilst, in my experience, it is difficult to be precise on this issue, from what I saw at my visit the ratio of buildings to plot size is very low and this low-density form is fundamental to the area's character.
8. Policy Ho15 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan 2005, (BLP), sets out that, development will not normally be permitted in a RASC, but that residential development that includes infilling will be permitted, subject to a number of criteria being met. Amongst these are requirements to respect and be compatible with the existing character of the area, and that the scheme would not result in plot sizes significantly smaller than those prevailing in the surrounding area.
9. The scheme proposes the sub-division of the plot into two roughly equal parts. A large detached dwelling would be erected on each plot, set in line with neighbouring properties.
10. I was not provided with drawn details of the scheme for two detached dwellings that was the subject of a recently dismissed appeal on the site¹. However, the evidence before me shows that each of the dwellings proposed here would be smaller in terms of their mass and scale, including the omission of dormers on their front elevations, when compared to those proposed in that scheme. There would also be an increase in the spaces between the proposed dwellings, and between them and the side boundaries of the site, when a similar comparison is made.
11. However, despite these changes, the plots would be significantly and uncharacteristically smaller than those prevailing nearby. They would be reportedly very similar in width to those proposed in an appeal on nearby Woodend². However, I note that the Inspector in that appeal found that the scheme would have resulted in a harmful reduction in the spacious character of the area.
12. I find that this would be the result here, too. The density of development would be markedly higher than that predominating in the area, and each of the proposed dwellings would take up a significant portion of the width of its plot. Notwithstanding the high hedge on the roadside boundary of the property, these substantial dwellings would be seen from the road, where the discordant increase in density would be readily identified.
13. Notwithstanding my finding on the change to the area's character, given the gaps between buildings that would result, I do not find that the proposed development would be seen as being cramped, which is amongst the principal objectives of BLP Policy Ho16.
14. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would significantly harm the spacious character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to the terms of BLP Policies Ho9, Ho 13 and Ho15. Amongst their terms, these policies require development proposals to reinforce local

¹ APP/L3625/W/18/3197579

² APP/L3625/W/18/3200504

distinctiveness, require resultant plot sizes not to be significantly smaller than those that prevail in an area, and aim to maintain and respect the character of the area in which a development is proposed. As I have not been given a copy of the Council's Local Distinctiveness Guide, it has not played a part in my decision.

15. In the light of the above, and having taken all other matters into consideration, I dismiss the appeal.

Roy Curnow

INSPECTOR