The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2019

by S Leonard BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 11th December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/W/19/3234733
Three Oaks, 104 Chase Road, Lindford, Bordon GU35 0RR

- 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 Gary Simmons (Simmons Property Developments Ltd) against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
- The application Ref 31613/009, dated 9 February 2019, was refused by notice dated 19 June 2019.
- The development proposed is demolition of existing 3 bedroom bungalow and outbuildings and the erection of 3 x 3 bedroom semi-detached dwellings with supporting car parking.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading has been taken from the application form and appeal form. For the avoidance of doubt, the description of development in the decision notice more accurately describes the appeal proposal as 3 pairs of semi-detached dwellings with supporting car parking after demolition of existing dwelling. This accords with the planning application drawings and I have determined the appeal on this basis.

3. The site location in the heading above is taken from the application form and appeal form. For the avoidance of doubt, the planning application drawings confirm that, in addition to 104 Chase Road, the appeal site also includes land to the rear of 102 Chase Road. This is reflected in the decision notice and officer report, and I have dealt with the appeal accordingly.

4. Notwithstanding the details included in the application form, decision notice and planning officer report, both parties have subsequently confirmed that the application is in outline form with access, appearance, layout and scale to be considered as part of this proposal. I have dealt with the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

6. The L-shaped appeal site comprises the site of 104 Chase Road and part of the rear garden of No.102, both of which are modest pitched roof bungalows sited at the southwestern end of Chase Road, where the road becomes a small cul-de-sac. Bollards separate the road from an area of parking associated with the adjacent two and two and a half storey houses in Hawthorn Way, which are part of the more modern, higher density, Chase Farm estate which lies to the south and southwest of the appeal site.

7. There is a distinct, visually perceptible, boundary between the different street scenes of the older Chase Road development and the more recent, and comprehensively planned, housing estate. This is defined by the end of the cul-de-sac, landscaping along the southwest boundary of the appeal site, and the noticeable difference between the scale and design of the appeal property and group of dwellings to the northeast of the appeal site, and the adjacent housing in Hawthorn Way.

8. The appellant has drawn my attention to the lack of specific reference to the area around the appeal site within the Lindford Village Design Statement (2006). Notwithstanding this, I find that there is a clearly evident, low density, spacious and verdant character of development at the southwestern end of Chase Road. The northwest side of this part of the road comprises bungalows and chalet bungalows with long gardens backing onto woodland at the rear. The woodland provides a landscaped backdrop to the built development, and is clearly visible in the street scene above the roofs of the dwellings and through the gaps between them. The verdant nature of this part of the road is further emphasised by grass highway verges and an undeveloped treed area opposite the appeal site. The soft landscaped front garden of the appeal site also makes a positive contribution to the green street scene in this respect.

9. The site has been the subject of a dismissed appeal decision in October 2015, Ref APP/M1710/W/15/3017922, with respect to four detached dwellings on land comprising part of the gardens of 100 - 104 Chase Road. There have been no material changes to the physical circumstances of the appeal site in relation to surrounding properties since the determination of the previous appeal. I concur with the view of the previous inspector that the appeal site shares many of the same attributes that are common to those properties to the northeast of the appeal site, and that it has a stronger association to that area than to the Chase Farm development.

10. The appeal proposal would include the demolition of No.104 and the removal of its soft landscaped front garden and several outbuildings within its rear garden, to enable the construction of a pair of semi-detached houses fronting onto Chase Road and two pairs of semi-detached houses in the garden land to the rear of Nos.102 and 104, with parking in front of the houses, accessed via a new access road adjacent to No.102. The frontage of the road-facing houses would be laid to parking, accessed directly from Chase Road.

11. The appeal proposal would detrimentally erode the verdant, spacious residential character of this part of Chase Road. The proposed frontage development would result in the loss of a significant amount of landscaping both adjacent to the road and adjacent 18 Hawthorn Way. The positioning of the new frontage building in close proximity to 18 Hawthorn Way, and the extent of land given over to frontage parking and the new access drive, would

leave little available space for any meaningful replacement planting at the front of the development. The resulting dominance of built development and access and parking areas would be out of keeping with the more landscaped development characteristic of this part of Chase Road.

12. The proposed scale, height, mass and bulk of the new frontage building would be over-dominant within the street scene in relation to the bungalows and chalet bungalows to the northeast of the appeal site, including the semi-detached bungalows at Nos. 100 – 102 Chase Road, notwithstanding that the new properties would comprise semi-detached houses rather than the detached houses of the previous appeal scheme. The new building would not be read as a 'transition' building between the bungalows and two storey housing in Hawthorn Way. Although its ridge height would be comparable to that of 18 Hawthorn Way, its higher ground level, eaves height and window cill heights and wider individual house frontages in comparison to No.18, would all serve to make the new building appear overly large in relation to No.18. Consequently, the proposed frontage building would comprise a discordant element within the street scene.

13. The four new houses at the back of the site would be clearly visible from the street via the new access drive. Due to the proposed small gap between the two buildings, they would present as an almost continuous row of full two-storey built development. This would erode the existing landscaped backdrop to the frontage development and contribute to the proposal appearing cramped and overwhelming in relation to the low-level bungalows at Nos. 100 and 102.

14. The combination of the full two storey height of the new buildings, their double property width, and the proximity of units 1 and 3 to the southwest side boundary and units 4 and 5 to each other, would result in an unduly cramped form of development which would be at odds with the aforementioned low-density spacious character to the northeast of Hawthorn Way. The provision of landscaping to the front and side of unit 6 is not sufficient to address the aforementioned concerns with respect to the harm to the prevailing character of this part of Chase Road. Nor is the acceptability of the appeal proposal with respect to its impact on the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties, which is a requirement of the development in any event.

15. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy 2014 which, amongst other things, seeks to ensure that new development is of an exemplary design standard which is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting in terms of its scale, height, massing and density, and its relationship to adjoining buildings and spaces around buildings, and makes a positive contribution to the overall appearance of the area. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Chapter 12 of the Framework which requires high quality design.

Other Matters

16. Notwithstanding that the Framework encourages the effective use of land in meeting the need for homes, including giving substantial weight to the value of using suitable brownfield land within settlements for homes and other identified

needs, this is not unqualified, and would not address or outweigh the harm to the character and appearance of the area.

17. There would be a small social benefit in providing five additional housing units, and economic benefits as a result of the construction and occupation of the new houses. However, these benefits are not of sufficient magnitude to outweigh my conclusion on the main issue.

18. Both parties have referred to the extant outline planning permission for four dwellings on the appeal site, Ref 31613/008, granted in June 2018. The approved scheme differs significantly from that of the appeal proposal. It comprises a chalet-style building to replace No.104, which would be positioned to maintain space to both sides, together with a single chalet-style building in the rear garden, located behind the frontage properties and 18 Hawthorn Way and accessed via the adjacent housing estate. The approved scheme would therefore have a minimal impact on the Chase Road street scene in comparison with the appeal proposal. Accordingly, the extant planning permission does not alter my views on the main issue.

Conclusion

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

S Leonard

INSPECTOR