The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 January 2020

by J E Jolly BA (Hons) MA MSc CIH MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3825/W/19/3236738
Sunnycroft, Two Mile Ash Road, Barns Green, RH13 0PX

- 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 Mrs Rachel Humber against the decision of Horsham District Council.
- The application Ref DC/19/0677, dated 22 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 August 2019.
- The development proposed is the erection of a four-bedroom, detached dwelling, with associated car parking and landscaping.

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 area.

Reasons

3. Two Mile Ash Road is characterised by a variety of traditional-style, one and two storey dwellings, most of which front onto Two Mile Ash Road as loose linear development close to the edge of the built-up boundary of Barns Green. To the side of the appeal site lies Bramble Close which is part of a more recent and distinct residential development that includes dwellings arranged in cul-de-sacs and small mews.

4. 'Sunnycroft' is a brick and tile chalet style bungalow facing onto Two Mile Ash Road and is sited on a generous plot with gardens to the front and rear. The appeal site can be accessed to the side of the host dwelling and forms the rear part of the subdivided back-garden. The front section of the back garden has been landscaped, and the grassed rear section associated with the proposal is accessed through a low wooden fence/gate where there are numerous mature fruit trees. The site is bounded to the rear by hedging and trees and what appears to be agricultural land for grazing animals beyond.

5. The development would necessitate the demolition of the garage associated with the host dwelling and the re-provision of a number of trees. The proposal is to build a detached, 4-bedroom two-storey, contemporary style property with two parking spaces adjacent the side boundary with Bramble Close. The dwelling would have an 'L' shape footprint and step-down to a flat roof single-storey section towards the rear boundary. The side elevation facing Bramble Close would have two small windows and be predominantly blank.

6. However, the location of the proposal, deep within the existing plot of 'Sunnycroft', is not typical of the prevailing pattern of development which is characterised by dwellings facing onto Two Mile Ash Road. Moreover, the development that includes Bramble Close, by virtue of its' style and layout, is also visually separate from the proposed dwelling. As such the incongruous siting of the development behind the host dwelling, and away from the road frontage, would be an unwelcome and prominent encroachment near to the built-up area boundary of Barns Green which could not be overcome through additional landscaping. Indeed, my opinion is reinforced by the facts 'on the ground', namely the verdant appearance of the existing and neighbouring rear garden areas which provide a subtle and gentle transition from the built-up area boundary to the agricultural land beyond. As such, the proposal which includes areas of hardstanding and elements of height, would unacceptably diminish the 'ribbon of greenery' and verdant landscaping in this specific location and cause harm to the character and appearance of the area.

7. Therefore, the proposal is contrary to Policies 32 and 33 of the Horsham District Council, Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) 2015 which state, amongst other things, that development should contribute to a sense of place and respect the character of the surrounding area including its' overall setting, and Paragraph 79 of the National Planning Policy Framework which requires development to be sensitive to the defining characteristics of an area.

Other Matters

8. I acknowledge an earlier appeal decision that included the same site in combination with 'Appletrees' put forward by the main parties, and that the appellant has attempted to address concerns raised in that appeal decision. Nonetheless, and for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal proposal would not overcome the concerns raised by the previous Inspector.

Conclusion

9. The appeal is dismissed.

J E JOLLY

INSPECTOR