



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 March 2020

by S Edwards MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 09 July 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/19/3239117

Talbot Lodge, 24 Burnt Hill Road, Wrecclesham, Farnham GU10 4RR

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs Cripps against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WA/2018/2161, dated 22 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 11 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is erection of a new dwelling from Burnt Hill Way.
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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. The appeal site comprises a grassed plateau, which currently forms part of the garden area of Talbot Lodge, a large two-storey dwelling set back from Burnt Hill Road sited at a lower level, and with a separate gated access onto Burnt Hill Way. The property is located within an established residential area primarily characterised by individually designed houses set within spacious and verdant plots. As defined within the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan (NP), the site lies within the South Farnham Arcadian Areas, which include parts of the town where the landscape is the dominant visual element. There is no doubt that the sylvan setting provides this locality with a pleasant semi-rural character.
4. Having regard to the appellant's submissions, which include a Landscape and Visual Assessment, and from my observations as part of the site visit which I carried out, it is clear that the proposed development would not be highly visible in the wider landscape. The detailed design of the property would replicate the architectural features which can be found elsewhere in the locality, using sympathetic materials, and the appeal development would to some extent be screened by the existing vegetation, and the close boarded fence along the Burnt Hill Way frontage.
5. Nevertheless, the large roof form of the proposal, despite its single storey scale, would be noticeable along Burnt Hill Way, and the new dwelling would also be visible from neighbouring residential properties. In an area where properties are sited at considerable distance from each other, the new dwelling would appear uncharacteristically close to the properties situated on the

opposite side of Burnt Hill Way, particularly by reason of the restricted width of the bridleway. As a result, the appeal development would appear as a discordant addition which would erode the spacious pattern of development and diminish the semi-rural character and appearance of the site's immediate surroundings.

6. Although limited information has been submitted in this respect, I am also concerned that the proposal would formalise the access to the new dwelling and expose the proposed parking and turning areas to provide adequate visibility in order to address the requirements of the Local Highway Authority. This would exacerbate the urbanising effect of the development, thus contrasting with the tranquil and informal setting of Burnt Hill Way.
7. The appellants have drawn my attention to a number of residential developments which have been approved within the South Farnham Arcadian Areas. However, I do not have the full details of the circumstances that led to these schemes being accepted, and cannot therefore be certain that they represent a direct parallel to the proposal before me, notably in respect of location, siting, pattern of development and development plan policy. This limits the weight which can be afforded to these approvals.
8. For the foregoing reasons, I consider that the proposal would unacceptably harm the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, it would conflict with Policy TD1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan (Part 1): Strategic policies and sites, NP Policies FNP1 and FNP8, as well as paragraphs 127, 128 and 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These policies notably seek to ensure that development proposals maintain the informal rural character and the well-wooded appearance of the area, and are sympathetic to the locality's landscape setting.

Other Matters

9. A number of concerns have been raised by interested parties, notably in respect of the effect of the development on highway safety and the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers, with particular regard to privacy. I note that the Council did not refuse the application on these grounds. However, given my findings in respect of the main issue, I have not considered these matters further.
10. The appeal site lies within proximity to Wealden Heaths I and Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Areas (SPA), which are recognised under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 as being of international importance for supporting significant numbers of nightjars, woodlarks and Dartford warblers in particular.
11. In respect of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, Natural England (NE) has confirmed that the proposal would have, in combination with other plans and projects, a likely significant effect on these European and International sites, by reason of the increased recreational pressure which residential development places on this sensitive area. The appellants have submitted a Unilateral Undertaking to secure a financial contribution in order to mitigate the effect of the development on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA.
12. As I am dismissing this appeal on other substantive grounds, this is not a matter which needs to be considered further here. However, it should be noted

that had the development been considered acceptable in all other respects, I would have sought to explore the necessity for undertaking an Appropriate Assessment to ensure that the proposal would not adversely affect the integrity of these protected areas, in accordance with the Habitats Regulations.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons detailed above, and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

S Edwards

INSPECTOR