



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2020

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 26 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/19/3241969

40 Parsonage Road, Cranleigh GU6 7AJ

- 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 B Nichols against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref WA/2019/1409, dated 8 May 2019, was refused by notice dated 23 October 2019.
 - The development proposed is construction of a detached two storey dwelling house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - ii) the amenities of neighbouring residents and highway safety, in respect of the potential for on-street vehicle parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The surrounding area in the vicinity of the site is generally characterised by semi-detached dwellings of varying designs but with complementary architectural features, mainly two storey but also with some bungalows on the opposite side of the road from the site. The two storey semi-pairs of dwellings, and most of the bungalows, are generally and distinctly separated from each other by significant gaps, particularly at first floor level in respect of the former. Together with the generally significant degree of set-back of dwellings from the road, behind mainly soft landscaped front gardens, roadside footways and grass verges of varying width, these factors create a distinctive and characteristic sense of openness and spaciousness and rhythm to the streetscene.
4. The space to the eastern side of the existing dwelling at No 40, where the proposed dwelling would be positioned, between the existing house and adjacent footpath, is particularly wide compared to most other properties in the vicinity, as is the case with the property on the other side of that footpath. However, this reflects the situation whereby that footpath bisects the two properties, with the side and rear garden of No 40, together with trees and

shrubs alongside the path, providing a pleasant, fairly open and verdant pedestrian route.

5. The gap between the proposed dwelling and the side of No 40 would be noticeably smaller at the front, and even smaller at the rear, than those gaps that generally exist between the two storey semi-pairs in the vicinity. This combined with the proposed dwelling's relatively modest width in comparison with the existing semi-pairs of buildings in the vicinity, would cause it to stand out as a jarring feature within the streetscene, appearing cramped within the confines of the plot's width. Any presence of existing detached dwellings in the wider area is not reflective of the distinctly semi-detached designs in the vicinity of the site. The close proximity of the proposed dwelling to the footpath to the east of the site, and the resultant reduction in the level of openness associated with that path, would further highlight the proposal's cramped appearance.
6. The limited amount of space to the side of the proposed dwelling would necessitate the proposed off-street car parking with associated hard surfacing to be in front of the proposed house with a resultant likelihood of limited space being left for frontage soft landscaping. This would contrast with other properties in the vicinity which generally have soft landscaped front gardens with driveways to their side. Together with an associated likely loss of a significant amount of the highway verge to enable the vehicular access, this would further draw attention to the cramped and incompatible nature of the proposed development within the context of the existing streetscene.
7. The proposed dwelling would pick up some design features of No. 40, such as the hipped roof with small gable features, and I acknowledge the intended use of complementary external materials. Furthermore, its angled siting in relation to No 40 would partly reflect the location on a bend in the road. However, these factors would be insufficient to mitigate the harm that, for the above reasons, I have otherwise found would be caused by the proposal in respect of this issue. There would, as a result, be a harmful disruption to the rhythm of development and the sense of openness and spaciousness within the streetscene, where the proposed development would be seen as a contrived and incongruous feature.
8. There are various small trees lining the opposite side of the footpath to the east of the site. Those trees provide a pleasant verdant appearance to that end of the footpath, complementing the open character of this locality. However, there is currently very little overhanging of branches across the site boundary due to the degree of separation from the site provided by the intervening footpath. Furthermore, from the nearest point to that boundary, the proposed dwelling would taper away from it, further minimising the likelihood of interference with the trees concerned. It would therefore be unlikely that the visual contribution of that row of trees would be harmfully affected by the proposed development.
9. I have had regard to the Council's concern regarding harm to the visual amenity of the area from potential pressure for on-street parking. The submitted plans show provision for 3 parking spaces in front of the proposed dwelling, albeit without full details of access via dropped kerb and footway cross-over. The Appellant also refers to being able to provide up to 3 off-street car parking spaces for the existing house. Although that has not been shown on

the submitted plans there would be sufficient space for side by side parking for No 40, albeit subject to providing appropriate drop kerb access. Such provision would therefore be likely to minimise the need to park on the street. Notwithstanding this, in visual terms I have no basis to consider that it would be unusual to see cars parked on the street and I do not consider that this would be likely to significantly detract from the open and spacious character of the area.

10. Despite my findings above in respect of the effect on those trees lining the adjacent footpath and in relation to any potential on-street car parking, this does not deflect from the harm that I have otherwise found would be caused in respect of this main issue.
11. For the above reasons, I conclude on this issue that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, in respect of this issue, it would be contrary to policy TD1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites (the LPSPS) and saved policies D1 and D4 of the Waverley Borough Council Local Plan (2002) (the Local Plan 2002) which together, amongst other things, require that the character, appearance, amenity and distinctiveness of the area is protected. In respect of this issue, it would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework which in section 12 relates to achieving well-designed places.

Amenities of neighbours and highway safety, in respect of potential for on-street vehicle parking

12. As referred to above, the Appellant's submissions show provision for off-street parking for the proposed dwelling and state the ability to provide up to three such spaces for the existing house, which would be likely to minimise the need to park on the street. I also consider that in terms of encouraging the use of alternative modes of transport, there would be adequate space within the site to accommodate cycle storage, details and implementation of which could be secured by a condition.
13. Notwithstanding this, were cars to be parked on the street, there are generally sufficient stretches of kerb in between property access points to enable on-street parking without blocking such accesses. I also have no other substantive basis to consider that such on-street parking would cause significant inconvenience to neighbouring residents.
14. On-street parking in the vicinity of the site would be likely to make it difficult for two oncoming vehicles to pass each other without one having to wait, due to the width of the road. However, I have no substantive basis to consider that this would cause such a hazard as to pose a risk to highway safety.
15. For the above reasons, I conclude on this issue that the proposed development would be unlikely to cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents or to pose a risk to highway safety, in respect of the potential for on-street vehicle parking. As such, in respect of this issue, it would accord with policies ST1 of the LPSPS and D4 of the Local Plan 2002 which together, amongst other things, require developments to make appropriate provision for car and cycle parking.

Planning balance

16. The proposed development would have the benefit of adding to the local supply of housing and would be likely to create jobs during its construction. However, those benefits would be small, relating only to a single dwelling.
17. I have found that the proposed development would be unlikely to cause unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring residents or to pose a risk to highway safety, in respect of the potential for on-street vehicle parking. However, that does not deflect from the unacceptable harm the proposal would cause to the character and appearance of the surrounding area which in turn would not be outweighed by those small benefits referred to above.

Conclusion

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

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR