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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 November 2021

**by L Page BSc (Hons) MSc MRTPI**

**an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State**

**Decision date: 1 December 2021**

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**Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/21/3276559**

**8 Burnt Hill Way, Wrecclesham, Farnham GU10 4RN**

- 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 Paul Webster against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
  - The application Ref WA/2020/1092, dated 25 June 2020, was refused by notice dated 8 December 2020.
  - The development proposed is erection of 2no. two storey detached dwellings with integral garages and parking following demolition of existing dwelling and detached outbuilding.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matter

2. The site is located within the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area's (SPA) zone of influence. Consequently, the proposal has been considered in the context of statutory duties set out within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitats Regulations). The matter has been dealt with later in my decision.

### Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

### Reasons

4. The site is located within the South Farnham Arcadian Areas, where the prevailing pattern of development is broadly defined by large and loosely spaced detached dwellings set in substantial plots, particularly around Celery Lane, Pine Ridge Drive and Longdown Road. There is a tighter urban grain along Burnt Hill Way, where dwellings are smaller and set in more modest plots. However, despite the address of the site, it is physically separated from Burnt Hill Way and an appreciable distance behind it. Consequently, it is not viewed in the same context. Indeed, the existing dwelling at the site is more closely related and in keeping with the larger dwellings and substantial plots along Celery Lane, Pine Ridge Drive and Longdown Road.

5. This relationship is reflected in South Farnham Arcadian Areas' boundaries and there is a clear distinction between the character and appearance of dwellings within the boundaries, which to my eye includes the site<sup>1</sup>, and surrounding residential development outside of it. There is nothing of the site that presents itself as transitional.
6. In the case of the dwellings known as Silverdale and Richmond, it is clear to me that Silverdale falls outside of the South Farnham Arcadian Areas boundary and Richmond appears as a natural extension to a small row of detached houses in accordance with the Council's contentions. Similarly, 12 and 14 Burnt Hill Way fall outside the defined boundaries. Consequently, these other dwellings do not share the same context as the site in this case.
7. The proposal would demolish the existing dwelling and detached outbuilding and subdivide the plot to create two dwellings of smaller scale and on smaller plots. Consequently, given the site's location within South Farnham Arcadian Areas and the prevailing pattern of development, the proposal would be disjointed to the extent that it would harm the character and appearance of the area.
8. Despite the clearly identifiable pattern of development, there is some variation in the use of materials and design of individual dwellings within the vicinity of the site including dwellings of contemporary design with extensive driveways. For example, as illustrated by Figure 4 of the appellant's statement.
9. Consequently, there is no clearly identifiable vernacular design, or clear uniformity of appearance that would require proposals to adopt a rigid design direction. Furthermore, elements of boundary features would provide screening to soften the appearance of the built form, which is a characteristic of the area. Consequently, I cannot conclude that the detailed design and materials of the proposal would be harmful.
10. Although there is flexibility to accommodate an appropriate design, there is clear harm to the prevailing pattern of development and altogether the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area and conflict with Policy TD1 of the Local Plan Part 1 2018, Policy FNP1 and FNP8 of the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan 2020, and Policies D1 and D4 of the Local Plan 2002. Among other things, these seek to protect the character and appearance of South Farnham Arcadian Areas.

### **Other Matters**

11. The site is within the zone of influence of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, it is not necessary for me to consider the potential for likely significant effects under the Habitats Regulations.
12. It is not disputed that the proposal would make efficient use of land. However, only one additional dwelling would be provided by the proposal, and this would make a limited contribution to housing land supply and other socio-economic drivers. Consequently, benefits would be altogether limited and not outweigh the harm identified under the main issue.

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<sup>1</sup> Even if it is on the boundary it is not clearly excluded, and the prevailing character suggests it should be treated as being included on the balance of probabilities.

13. The planning history of the site is noted, but it is not clear that the previous proposals are directly relevant to this case. For example, WA/2017/0733 related to an extension, and WA/2018/0099 related to a single replacement dwelling that did not involve subdivision. Consequently, they are not directly comparable in my mind, and any conclusions drawn by other inspectors are not binding in this context. Furthermore, in both cases it would appear there has since been a change in the development plan and so the material considerations at play are different. Altogether, the planning history of the site carries limited weight under this appeal.

**Conclusion**

14. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

*Liam Page*

INSPECTOR