



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 5 June 2023

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 July 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/M1710/W/22/3304579

Land south of 1 Uplands Road, Rowlands Castle PO9 6BT

- 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 Albert Jones against the decision of East Hampshire District Council.
 - The application Ref 38344/002, dated 7 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 July 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of single storey detached dwelling along with associated access and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council states that it has received a financial contribution to mitigate the impact of the proposed development on the Solent Special Protection Area. In the event that permission was granted, the authority would look to impose a planning condition to secure the necessary credits in the Meon Springs scheme to overcome the nitrates issue. On this basis, the Council is no longer seeking to defend the second reason for refusal.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The site was originally part of the rear garden to 18 Bowes Hill but has since been severed to form a separate parcel of land. There is a mature hedge along the frontage onto Uplands Roads. The proposal would require the removal of a short section of this hedge to provide access to the new dwelling.
5. There are some detached bungalows along this stretch of Uplands Road, but the majority are semi-detached. Those on the eastern side, to the north of the appeal site, are positioned close to the road behind shallow front gardens defined by low walls and hedges. Plot sizes vary, but most properties benefit from deep back gardens. No 1 Uplands Road is the exception, this plot being smaller on account of tandem development having taken place at the rear.

6. The proposed development would occupy a plot which is almost half the size of No 1 and substantially smaller than others in the street. Although the property frontage would be comparable, the site would be considerably shallower in depth. As a consequence, the new dwelling would be pushed up against the eastern boundary of the site, with a narrow margin to the boundary hedge. There would be no rear garden and the private amenity space would be accommodated to the side of the property. Although there is no suggestion that this space would be inadequate for the needs of future occupiers, its size and layout would be out of character with other gardens in Uplands Road.
7. The site is bounded by hedges on three sides, and this would screen the development from some angles. However, the long-term retention of hedging, beyond the normal maintenance period secured by planning condition, cannot be guaranteed, particularly on a small site like this where there could be pressure for more light within the property, space within the garden and easier maintenance. In any event, it is not appropriate to rely on existing vegetation (or new planting) to disguise development which is at odds with the pattern of surrounding built form by reason of its diminutive plot size and cramped nature.
8. The appellant has provided a map showing other dwellings in the area with similar plot sizes to that proposed. I do not know the background to those developments, but they do not form part of the immediate site context and are not reflective of the prevailing character of Uplands Road which comprises housing in deeper, more spacious plots.
9. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposal would be materially harmful to the character and appearance of the area. There is conflict with Policy CP29 of the East Hampshire District Local Plan: Joint Core Strategy (2014). Amongst other things, this policy seeks to ensure that the layout and design of development contributes to local distinctiveness and sense of place, and is appropriate and sympathetic to its setting, including in relation to spaces around buildings. In this respect, the development plan is consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework in seeking to secure developments that are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

10. Interested parties have raised concerns about a range of other matters. I have taken these into account when determining the appeal, but they do not lead me to a different overall conclusion. Had the scheme been acceptable in all other respects, I would have needed to undertake an appropriate assessment in respect of the impact on European sites. However, since the appeal is being dismissed for other reasons, this is not necessary.

Conclusion

11. The appeal scheme would deliver a new 1-bedroom home in a location which has good access to services and facilities, and public transport. However, the benefits in this regard, and any associated economic benefits, are outweighed by the harm to the character and appearance of the area. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR