
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 March 2024

by C Hall BSc MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10.04.2024

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/W/23/3323416

Tanglewood, Tydcombe Road, Warlingham, Surrey CR6 9LU

- 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 P Furr against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2023/24, dated 9 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 6 April 2023.
 - The proposed development is for the conversion and extension of existing garage to create a new dwelling, together with associated car parking, landscaping and amenity space.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. My attention has been drawn to a previous appeal on the site that was dismissed in September 2020 (Planning Inspectorate reference APP/M3645/W/19/3243856). I shall have regard to this background when considering the merits of this proposal.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the development having regard to the character and appearance of the site and surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises a garage building with parking area on Tydcombe Road. The local neighbourhood is predominantly residential in nature and consists of large houses set in substantial plots.
 5. The previous appeal Inspector outlined that Tanglewood, together with Hermitage and Old Firs to either side, appear as part of a group of three large, individually designed detached properties. The plots for these residential buildings are shallow and wide, reflected in a significant amount of open and undeveloped space to the side of each building, and collectively exhibiting a spacious character. This analysis reflects my observations on site.
 6. I acknowledge that the separation distance from Tanglewood would increase, and the scale and height of the scheme would be reduced when compared to the previous appeal development. Nonetheless, the proposed dwelling would be clearly evident from the public highway together with the extent of its plot.
-

7. Despite the alterations, I am of the view that the plot and dwelling would remain uncharacteristically narrow and small within the context of the locality. The proposed streetscene plan emphasises my concerns in this respect, the new residence would appear awkwardly positioned and incongruous when seen in relation to the larger houses to either side.
8. In design terms, the scheme would introduce a squat building of deep plan form with a large expanse of unattractive crowned roof. To my mind this solution would appear discordant and lack architectural subtlety, failing to integrate successfully with the immediate surroundings.
9. I recognise that the local area comprises an eclectic mixture of dwellings, varying in size, age, design, external finish and boundary treatments. Moreover, the building orientation would replicate all other properties along the street scene, all existing trees and vegetation would be retained and can be enhanced as part of a landscaping scheme, and no objections are raised in respect of residential amenity, highway safety, biodiversity, and energy efficiency. However, these matters would not outweigh the harm identified above.
10. I also appreciate that there may be other instances of flat roofs to buildings and dormer windows elsewhere. Nevertheless, development at other properties would be neutral considerations in any balance against planning harm, and I am mindful that each case must be assessed on its own merits.
11. Taken together, the narrow plot width, diminutive nature of the building in comparison to those to either side and poor design lead me to conclude that the scheme would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. It would contravene Policy CSP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy (2008) and Policies DP7 and DP8 of the Tandridge District Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies (2014), which seek to secure development of acceptable scale and appearance. It would be inconsistent with the advice in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), which states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development.

Planning Balance

12. The Framework does not change the statutory status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Based upon my previous findings, the proposal is not in accordance with the policies of the development plan due to the harm I have identified in terms of the character and appearance of the area. The absence of harm relating to other matters, for example in terms of the living conditions of occupiers of neighbouring properties, are a neutral factor.
13. It is not a matter of dispute that there is a shortfall relative to the Council's ability to demonstrate a deliverable five year supply of housing. Consequently, the housing policies which are most important for determining the application are out of date and paragraph 11(d) of the Framework should be applied.
14. The development would make a positive contribution to housing supply in an accessible location with associated social and economic benefits, including to the local economy during construction and to local services and facilities upon occupation. However, to my mind, when assessed against the policies of the Framework as a whole, the adverse impacts of granting

planning permission in this case in terms of the harm to the character and appearance of the area would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits of the development proposed. Therefore the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in the particular circumstances of this case.

15. The conflict with the development plan and the Framework when taken as a whole and the associated harm to the character and appearance of the area identified are significant and overriding factors. Consequently, the material considerations in this case, including the contribution to housing supply and associated benefits previously identified, do not indicate that the application should be determined otherwise than in accordance with the development plan.

Conclusion

16. Having regard to all matters raised and with regard to my reasoning above, the appeal is dismissed.

C Hall

INSPECTOR