



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 October 2024

by R J Redford MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 5th November 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/W/24/3344829

4 Glebe Road, Crondall, Farnham, Hampshire GU10 5PJ

- 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 Charles Alcock against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref is 24/00427/FUL.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a three bedroom dwelling with associated hard and soft landscaping and cycle store and alterations to hard and soft landscaping to existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on highway safety, the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Highway safety

3. The properties along Glebe Road are set at a higher level than the road, and the road itself is reasonably steep and narrow with no pavements and a prevalence of on road parking, evident when I visited the site. This means that due to the topography of the area, views along the road can be restricted when positioned back from the road edge.
4. As the scheme would require cars to either reverse into or out of the proposed parking spaces and manoeuvre on the road. Therefore, intervisibility between users of the parking and other road users is important to ensure highway safety. The location of the proposed parking space defined as 'parking 1' for the new dwelling¹ would be close to the boundary of the appeals site which, in conjunction with the slope of the road and adjacent properties garden, means intervisibility between users of that space and those travelling down Glebe Road from St Cross Road would be restricted.
5. With nothing before me to conclude otherwise, and taking a precautionary approach due to the narrowness, parking conditions and lack of pavement on Glebe Road, I find that the level of intervisibility between proposed 'parking 1' and the road would not be sufficient to ensure highway safety. The proposal would therefore fail to comply with Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032

¹ As shown on plan reference 11264 01 P

(LPSS) Policy INF3 insofar as it requires new development to provide safe access.

6. The appellant has acknowledged the need to alter access for the site, however I am bound to make my decision on the details submitted.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area

7. The appeal site is within 5km of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 require an appropriate assessment to ensure that the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the SPA.
8. The SPA qualifies for such protection as it supports populations of rare bird species, which are susceptible to predation and disturbance. The additional dwelling proposed, whilst minimal on its own, would contribute to an increased population in combination with other plans, projects, and developments in the area. Due to the proximity of the development to the SPA, it is likely that its contribution to the increase in population could lead to an increase in visitor and recreational pressure within the SPA. Given the susceptibility and vulnerability of the qualifying features of the SPA to such uses, it cannot be concluded that the development would not adversely affect the integrity of the protected sites in combination with other projects.
9. Saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan reflects the need to protect the SPA and LPSS Policy NBE3 sets out how harm could be mitigated. It requires mitigation measures in the form of a contribution towards a combination of Strategic Access Management and Monitoring and the provision and maintenance of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.
10. The appellant has stated they would contribute. However, the Council confirm no contribution has been made and there is nothing before me securing such a contribution nor is an alternative proposed. Therefore, I am unable to conclude that the proposal would not have a harmful effect on the SPA. Consequently, the proposal would fail to comply with LPSS Policy NBE3 and saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan 2009.

Character and appearance

11. Glebe Road is part of a later residential extension to the historic village of Crondall. However, this extension has a somewhat suburban character where the properties are all of a similar functional vernacular. They are predominantly two-storey and semi-detached with rear and side gardens. There are examples of large side extensions and infill development which have reduced the size of some of the side gardens. The properties along Glebe Road follow a clear building line with parking or gardens to the front.
12. The proposal would erect a detached dwelling in the side garden of the host dwelling. It would be towards the boundary of the site and provide drives to the side of both the host and new dwelling with additional parking to the front.
13. It is accepted that historically the semi-detached pairs along Glebe Road were separated by the side garden creating a reasonably spacious layout. However, as evidenced by the existing extensions and infill development, although reducing the space between buildings new development can be incorporated without significantly altering the overall character of the road.

14. The proposal would be no different, it would provide reasonable space between the new and host dwelling, would not encroach on the adjacent properties side garden, and would follow the existing building line. It is of a style and form similar to the other properties on Glebe Road, albeit a detached version rather than semi-detached, and would introduce planting to the front which would soften its overall appearance. It would constitute change and reduce the space between the host dwelling and adjacent property, but I do not find this to be so much of a change as to constitute harm. The proposal would integrate into the surrounding area and a condition could be used to prevent side extensions on the host and new dwelling to retain the space around both properties.
15. I therefore find the proposal would not harm the character and appearance of the surrounding area and would comply with LPSS Policy NBE9, Hart District Council Local Plan (Replacement) 1996 – 2006 Policy GEN 1, and Crondall Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2032 Policy 3 insofar as they require development to reflect and incorporate the characteristics of the local area and to be in keeping with the local character.

Other Matters

16. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) seeks to boost the supply of homes and make more efficient use of land in accessible locations. The proposal would provide a net increase of 1 home in a reasonably accessible location. Along with the associated economic and social benefits, this contribution to the windfall element of the Council's five-year housing land supply attracts limited weight based on the number of houses involved.
17. However, housing provision should not come at the cost of highway safety or protection of the SPA, a position also supported by the Framework. Consequently, when weighed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, I find that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would outweigh the proposed benefits.
18. The Council have found no harm in relation to living conditions of future occupants and neighbouring residents, biodiversity, and flood risk. However, no harm is by definition neutral so can not weigh for or against the proposal.
19. Interested parties have raised concerns in relation to precedence and the sewage system. As I am dismissing the appeal on other grounds, I have not considered these further.

Conclusion

20. Whilst I have found for the appellant in relation to the third main issue. This would be a lack of harm so is in capable of weighing against the harm that I have found regarding the first and second main issues. Consequently, the appeal scheme would conflict with the development plan as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the Framework, worthy of sufficient weight that would indicate a decision otherwise. The appeal should, therefore, be dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR