



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 April 2025

by **Philip Willmer BSc Dip Arch RIBA**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 May 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/25/3358844

St Michaels, Charlwood Road, Charlwood, Surrey RH6 0AL.

- 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 Lin Clarke against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref is MO/2024/1708/PLAH.
 - The development proposed is a new vehicle access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal site is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Council has determined that the proposed development would not be an inappropriate form of development in the Green Belt. I see no reason to disagree, and I shall therefore determine the appeal on this basis.

Main Issues

3. In the light of the foregoing, I consider that there are two main issues in this case:
 - the effect of the proposed development on highway safety, and
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

First main issue

4. The appeal site comprises St Michaels a detached chalet bungalow located towards the front of the triangular shaped plot. There is a further residential dwelling towards the rear. The application drawings only show one current cross-over serving St Michaels. However, as I observed there are two vehicular cross-overs to Charlwood Road.
5. The appellant proposes a new third access to serve the dwelling to the rear of the site. The proposed access would be 3.5 metres wide and sited just to the north of the most northern of the two existing points of access to St Michaels. The new cross over would be located part way between two bends in the road.

6. Charlwood Road at this point has a 40mph speed limit. However, given the location and the characteristics of the road I agree with the Highway Authority that faster vehicle speeds are likely here. A speed survey has not been provided so that actual road speed cannot be accurately assessed.
7. Visibility splays of 2.4 metres x 53.0 meters are proposed to the south of the junction and 2.4 metres x 93.0 metres to the north. Assuming that vehicles are traveling at the speed limit of 40 mph I would have typically expected visibility splays of at least 2.4 x 65 metres in both directions. However, without a speed survey it cannot be assumed that visibility splays of even 2.4 x 65 metres, if achievable would be adequate in this case.
8. In addition, while I agree that the proposed location of the access to the north of the current access would offer slightly better visibility than the current northern crossover to St Michaels, without the necessary supporting speed survey, I am not satisfied that the proposed visibility splays would be adequate to serve a new crossover.
9. Given that there are two dwellings on the site the formation of a further access would not in itself result in an intensification of vehicle movements on or off the site. However, a third cross over in close proximity to the existing two might well, particularly if on occasion all three driveways were to be in use at the same time, lead to some confusion for road users entering or exiting the site.
10. I therefore conclude on the first main issue that the proposed additional access as designed would be likely to result in significant harm to the safety of road users at this point. The proposal would therefore be contrary to the objectives of National Planning Policy Framework, Policy INF1 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020-2039 (LP) and the objectives of Surrey Local Transport Plan 2022-2032 as they relate maintaining highway safety.

Second main issue

11. The Council when determining the application were concerned about the development's potential impact on existing trees, dense hedging and shrubs, which is part of the established character of Charlwood Road. However, it was apparent on my visit that the area around the proposed access had already been cleared of the original mature soft landscaping and replaced with a new conifer hedge.
12. Although, the original trees, hedging and shrubs have been recently removed it was evident from what I saw on site that the original planting would have been both mature and extensive. I do not consider that the recently planted young conifer hedge, by reason of the chosen species of hedging, more often found in sub-urban gardens, would even when it matures be an appropriate substitute in this rural location.
13. I therefore conclude in respect of the second main issue that the loss of the original landscaping without an appropriate scheme of replacement would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area.
14. To allow the development would therefore be contrary to the aims of LP Policies EN4 and EN9 that require, amongst other things that all new development makes a positive contribution to the local character and takes the opportunity to improve the quality of local landscape.

Conclusions

15. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Philip Willmer

INSPECTOR