



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 August 2025

by Stewart Glassar BSc (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 9th of September 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/W/25/3363857

Zeka House, The Drive, Ifold, Loxwood, West Sussex RH14 0TE

- 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 Alex Bozic against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref is PS/23/02518/FUL.
 - The development proposed is proposed detached 2 bedroom dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. Subsequent to the Council's decision, the Chichester Local Plan 2021 - 2039 was adopted, replacing the Chichester Local Plan 2014 - 2029. The Council's reason for refusal included reference to policies in the then emerging plan. The main parties were aware of the advanced nature of the emerging Local Plan and that weight would be attributable to the policies in accordance with how far the process had advanced by the time I made my decision. I have not been provided with any information to indicate that the wording of the policies relevant to this appeal have substantially changed in the interim. Accordingly, I make my decision in the light of the new Local Plan policies and give them full weight.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. This part of The Drive is characterised by detached dwellings of mixed appearance. The building line varies, but dwellings are typically set well back from their front boundaries within large plots, and the spacing around them is appreciable. There is limited built form close to corners and junctions.
5. This results in a loose-knit pattern with high levels of landscaping around buildings, including boundary trees, tall hedges or other established vegetation which in many cases partly screen the buildings. In combination, these factors confer a sense of spaciousness and give the area an attractive and highly verdant character. Zeka House and its curtilage, including the appeal site, positively contributes to this prevailing character.
6. The proposed scheme involves the erection of a new one and a half storey dwelling located to the front of Zeka House. The building would reflect some of the

styling and materials found on the host dwelling. Such a structure would not, in and of itself, be out of keeping with the character of built form in the area.

7. The proposed dwelling would be set away from the front and side boundaries of the plot. Nevertheless, it would be noticeably conspicuous, being forward of Zeka House and Siskins and positioned towards the corner of the site. This would be heightened by the dwelling being side-on to The Drive, an uncommon arrangement for frontage buildings in the vicinity.
8. The houses in Wildacre Close are set well back from the appeal site. Consequently, this adjacent cul-du-sac is not clearly associated with, nor does it significantly contribute to the context of the appeal site and thus ameliorate the irregularity of the dwelling's positioning within the street scene.
9. The existing plot of Zeka House would be subdivided to accommodate the proposed development. Although there is some variety in plot shapes and sizes in the area, the plots, particularly the one serving the new dwelling, would be smaller than most others along this part of The Drive, further accentuating the discordant nature of the proposal.
10. I acknowledge that the dwelling has been designed to be subservient in scale to the host property and reduce its prominence when viewed from The Drive. Nevertheless, the proposed dwelling would be an overt addition to the site and visible in wider views. Accordingly, the proposal would not result in a natural extension of the existing pattern of development, nor would it make a positive contribution to the established character of The Drive.
11. I also acknowledge that the proposal would not significantly increase the density of development in the area but would at the same time make more efficient use of the land. However, this would be to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
12. I have had regard to the various buildings which the appellant draws to my attention, including the new dwelling to the rear of Moyana and the houses forming Chequer Close. However, they do not harm the character and appearance of the street scene in the same way the appeal proposal would. They do not therefore lead me to allowing the appeal.
13. Overall, I do not find the factors in support of the proposal to outweigh the harm to local distinctiveness arising from the unsympathetic development which would result. Consequently, I conclude that the proposal would have a significantly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such, it conflicts with Policies P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5 of the Chichester Local Plan 2021 - 2039 which, amongst other things, seek to ensure developments are well laid out and have regard to context and so respect the surrounding area and local character.
14. There would also be a conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which seeks to ensure that development achieves a high standard of design and is sympathetic to local character.

Other Matters

15. There is no dispute between the main parties that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing land. The appellant indicates the supply to be 4.19 years, a figure which the Council does not dispute.

As the Council's current planning policies are failing to deliver the houses required to meet government targets the provision of a new dwelling weighs positively in favour of the proposal.

16. There are aspects of the scheme to which there are said to be no objections, such as highway safety, drainage, ecology, water neutrality, effect on neighbours. These represent an absence of harm and as such do not weigh positively in favour of the development.

Planning Balance

17. Given the absence of a 5-year supply of housing land and that there are no policies in the Framework which offer a strong reason for refusal, Paragraph 11(d)(ii) of the Framework is engaged.
18. The proposal would make a positive, albeit small numerical contribution towards boosting housing supply. It would also result in some economic benefits during the construction phase and subsequently upon occupation. There may also be some social benefits too. The dwelling would be within an established residential area and could no doubt be built out relatively quickly. The Framework highlights the importance of ensuring an adequate supply of housing sites, and the need to support economic growth and productivity. Despite the proposal only being for a single dwelling, I give considerable weight to its provision given the context of the housing land supply position.
19. Weighed against this is the harm that I have identified to the character and appearance of the area. This harm is likely to be substantial and long lasting. The need to avoid such harm is perennial and in direct compliance with the Framework. Indeed, there is nothing in the Framework which indicates that the provision of housing should undermine or be at the expense of local character and appearance. Accordingly, I ascribe this harm substantial weight.
20. I therefore find that the adverse impacts of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. Consequently, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply in this case.

Conclusion

21. In conclusion, the proposal conflicts with the development plan when taken as a whole. There are no material considerations, including the provisions of the Framework, that indicate that a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Stewart Glassar

INSPECTOR