



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 24 November 2025

by **P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/25/3368140

Land to the rear of Robins Wood, Land off Old Compton Lane, Farnham GU9 8EL

- 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 Ms R Eagle against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2022/01311.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single detached dwelling together with car parking landscaping alterations to vehicular access and associated works.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the banner heading above is taken from the application form. I have however removed any wording which in itself does not relate to acts of development.
3. Modifications to the proposal were put forward as a part of the appeal. These include the removal of some of the single storey front/side elements of the building. The Procedural Guide for Planning Appeals¹ is clear that the appeal process should not be used to evolve a scheme, and it is important that what is considered by the Inspector is essentially what was considered by the local planning authority (LPA), and on which interested people's views were sought.
4. While acknowledging the comments of the appellant in respect of the proposal's relationship with adjoining neighbours, the changes, as shown on the amended plans, are nevertheless substantially different to what was considered by the LPA when it made its decision. Therefore, in the interests of fairness, this appeal must be determined based on the plans on which the LPA made its decision, and which have been subject to consultation. To do otherwise would unacceptably prejudice the interests of other parties who may not be fully aware that the appeal proposal would be different to that originally put forward. For this reason, I have determined the appeal using the plans that were considered by the LPA.
5. My attention is drawn to a previous appeal decision² for the construction of two dwellings within the site. I have had regard to that decision only insofar as it is relevant to my assessment of the main issues in this case, but I have determined the appeal based on the evidence and the details of the proposal before me.

¹ Procedural Guide: Planning Appeals – England 2025

² Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/19/3243387

Main Issue

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

Reasons

7. The appeal site is a largely undeveloped parcel of paddock land which is accessed off Old Compton Lane, a winding single track lane. Given the local topography, the levels at the site fall south to north and the boundary of the site is generally defined by mature trees and hedging.
8. There is residential development on both sides of the lane, which is mixed in character and includes detached dwellings of varying scales which range from traditional to more contemporary designs. While the dwellings are positioned at different setbacks from the road, an informal building line is discernible. Plots also vary in terms of size and shape but are normally spacious and accommodate mature vegetation.
9. The pattern of development is organic, including linear development and some examples of back-land development. Generally, the area comprises houses of varying sizes dispersed sparingly amongst large open spaces, gardens and woodland. This provides the lane with a pleasant and verdant character.
10. The appeal scheme seeks to construct a detached dwelling within the site. The proposed Neo-Georgian design, with an extended wing, would result in a fairly wide dwelling with a significant bulk that would be placed centrally within the plot. Whereas there would be some space between the proposal and the nearby dwellings, the site offers a modest street frontage, so the scale and size of the dwelling would appear jarring when glimpsed from Old Compton Lane, at odds with the surrounding context of dwellings nestled in greenery.
11. The slightly sunken position of the dwelling would not fundamentally alter the bulk of the structure and, consequently, the plot would appear dominated by built form, at odds with the local character. While the soft-landscaped frontage would be retained, and additional planting could be provided, it is unlikely it would successfully assimilate the large scale of the proposed dwelling.
12. Due to its varied nature and lack of homogeneity in style, the streetscape is tolerable to new design. However, the proposed design would be formal, with an imposing façade and symmetry that would exacerbate the prominence of the building and be at odds with the more informal design of nearby properties.
13. The proposed dwelling would be sited deep within the plot and set further back than neighbouring homes. However, the scheme would result in a linear arrangement. The proposed block plan shows that the driveway would lead to the dwelling, which would indicate the presence of frontage development only on site. The site is surrounded by residential development and, as such, the proposal would not sit beyond the established envelope of built development in the area.
14. Consequently, while the proposal would break the informal building line, it would not appear as a form of back-land development and, in this respect, it would not be at odds with its surrounding context. Nevertheless, this would not overcome the harm arising from the scale, bulk and size of the proposed dwelling.

15. The appellant directs my attention to Redwood Lodge, opposite the site. While it sits on higher ground, the front façade of this dwelling presents different setbacks, which assist in reducing its visual bulk and mass. As such, I am not persuaded that the proposal would be justified by this neighbouring dwelling.
16. Thus, the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy TD1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites (2018) (LPP1), Policies DM1 and DM4 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (2023) (LPP2), and Policy FNP1 of the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan 2013-2032 (2020) (NP). Amongst other things, these policies require development to be of high-quality design, respond effectively to its surroundings, reinforce local distinctiveness and respond to the local context by taking into account the scale of development, considering the surrounding structures.

Other Matter

17. The appeal site is located within the 5km buffer zone of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) and within the buffer zone of the Wealden Heaths I SPA. These sites are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Regulations). In this regard, a unilateral undertaking is submitted which would secure a mitigation payment in relation to the requirements set out in the Avoidance Strategy. However, Regulation 63(1) of the Regulations indicates that the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment is only necessary where the competent authority is minded to give consent for the proposal. As the appeal is being dismissed on other grounds it is not necessary to consider this matter further.

Planning Balance

18. The parties agree that the Council is unable to demonstrate a five-year supply of deliverable housing sites. However, while the Council advises that the figure is of 1.8 years, the appellant states that the Council's most recent monitoring report sets out that the Council can demonstrate a housing land supply of 1.28 years. The Council does not dispute this figure. In any event, the shortfall is significant.
19. In such circumstances, paragraph 11 d) ii of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
20. The proposal would be acceptable in terms of other aspects, including its effect on the living conditions of adjoining neighbours and highway safety. However, these are neutral factors that neither weigh for or against the development.
21. In terms of benefits, the proposal would meet the Framework's objectives of boosting the supply of housing and would deliver a new dwelling close to public transport links and to Farnham town centre. Some economic benefits would be accrued during the period of construction and once the dwelling is occupied. Additionally, the proposal would logically reduce the pressure for development in the countryside. Owing to the Council's housing land supply position, these benefits attract considerable weight in favour of the appeal scheme.

22. The proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area for the reasons outlined above. The Framework seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. Therefore, the conflict between LPP1 Policy TD1, LPP2 Policies DM1 and DM4 and NP Policy FNP1 should be given significant weight in this appeal.
23. Thus, the adverse impacts of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

24. The proposal conflicts with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal should be dismissed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR