

2016/0038

Reg Date 18/01/2016

Watchetts

LOCATION: 92 PARK ROAD, CAMBERLEY, GU15 2LN
PROPOSAL: Formation of an access road to serve Kingsclear Care Home development (Class C2) following the demolition of existing dwelling (Class C3). (Amended plan rec'd 10/02/16). (Additional information recv'd 12/4/16).
TYPE: Full Planning Application
APPLICANT: Mr Craig Griffen
Caring Homes Group Ltd
OFFICER: Duncan Carty

This application would normally be determined under delegated powers, however, it is being reported to the Planning Applications Committee at the request of Cllr David Lewis.

RECOMMENDATION: REFUSE

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The proposal relates to a residential dwelling on the south east side of Park Road within the settlement of Camberley and relates to the demolition of this dwelling to provide a new vehicular access to the Kingsclear Nursing Home (currently under redevelopment under permission SU/14/0562) with the existing access closed for access to this Nursing Home.
- 1.2 The current proposal is not CIL liable. The current proposal is considered to be acceptable in terms of its impact on local character, residential amenity and highway safety. However, the loss of the residential unit is not considered to be acceptable, and any highway safety (or any other) benefits would not overcome these concerns. As such, the proposal is considered to be unacceptable and the application is recommended for refusal.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The application site lies on the south east side of Park Road within the settlement of Camberley, between the road junctions with Park Street and Garfield Road. The application property is residential dwelling and its associated garden. The site falls within a "Wooded Hills" character area as defined within the Western Urban Area Character SPD 2012, which is defined as having a soft, green, semi-rural character. The frontage strip falls within an area of Group 11 of Tree Preservation Order No. 14/70.

3.0 RELEVANT PLANNING HISTORY

There is no relevant planning history to the site. However, the following relevant history relates to the adjoining site:

- 3.1 SU/14/0562 Erection of a detached three storey building to provide a 90 bedroom care home at Kingsclear Nursing Home. Approved in December 2014 and under construction.

4.0 THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 The proposal relates to the demolition of this dwelling to provide a new vehicular access to the Kingsclear Nursing Home (currently under re-development under permission SU/14/0562) with the existing access, between 96 and 104 Park Road, closed for access to this Nursing Home. The existing access would be retained only for a residential property, 96 Park Road, which adjoins this access. The proposed access road would measure 5.5 metres in width, when compared with the existing access at a width of 4.5 metres.

5.0 CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 County Highway Authority No objections.
 Senior Environmental No objections (verbal).
 Health Officer

6.0 REPRESENTATIONS

At the time of the preparation of this report, no representations had been received in support and 12 objections have been received (from 7 addresses) raising the following objections:

- 6.1 The care home redevelopment did not include this proposal and if had done so, an objection on this ground would have been made at that time. The grounds of objection to the nursing home development remain in place [*Officer comment: Each application proposal has to be determined on its own merits*]
- 6.2 Lack of need [*Officer comment: This is not a reason, in itself, to warrant the refusal of this application*]
- 6.3 Traffic congestion on Park Road, which would be exacerbated by this proposal and increased traffic to the nursing home [*See Paragraph 7.5*]
- 6.4 Increase in highway safety risk from another access onto Park Road, particularly with the high level of on-street parking (used as a town centre over flow) on the north side of Park Road, opposite the proposed access point, and the resulting difficulties of access for large vehicles, and also pedestrian safety [*See Paragraph 7.5*]
- 6.5 The loss of a four bedroom dwelling would have an adverse impact on character and appearance of the road [*See Paragraph 7.2*]
- 6.6 Retrograde step when there is an existing shortage of housing. A family have replaced the nursing home staff who previously occupied this dwelling [*See Paragraph 7.2*]
- 6.7 A second access road is not needed [*Officer comment: The applicant has clarified that the existing access would only be closed for the nursing home and only used by a residential property, 94 Park Road*]

- 6.8 Drainage and flooding, exacerbating existing excessive surface water run-off in Park Road [See Paragraph 7.6]
- 6.9 Demolition of housing [See Paragraph 7.2]
- 6.10 Noise, disturbance and light pollution from new access/use of nursing home [See Paragraph 7.4]
- 6.11 Loss of trees (including a beech tree) and resulting impact on streetscene and health of retained trees (including those on adjoining sites). Suggested replacement trees can be mitigated because the tree loss is to the frontage (where the access is proposed) [See Paragraph 7.3]
- 6.12 Lack of details in statement concerning the acoustic fence, and the need proves a noise impact [See Paragraph 7.4]
- 6.13 Impact on security [See Paragraph 7.4]
- 6.14 Loss of privacy, exacerbated by tree removal at the site boundaries and site topography [See Paragraph 7.4]
- 6.15 Lack of consultation with local residents [*Officer comment: This would not be a reason to refuse this application*]
- 6.16 Future maintenance of boundary fence [*Officer comment: This is a private matter*]

7.0 PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 The application site falls within the settlement of Camberley. The proposal is not CIL liable. The current proposal is to be assessed against Policies CP1, CP3, CP6, CP11, DM9, DM10 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and advice within the Western Urban Area Character SPD 2012. The main issues in the consideration of this application are:
 - Principle of the development;
 - Impact on local character;
 - Impact on residential amenity;
 - Impact on highway safety; and
 - Impact on drainage and flood risk.

7.2 Principle of the development

- 7.2.1 Policy CP3 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 confirms that “*any development which results in the loss of housing unless it can be demonstrated that the benefits outweigh the harm.*” The applicant has raised a number of issues in support of their proposal in response:

- The safety and legibility of the site;
- The existing use of the property and the accommodation available at the nursing home redevelopment;
- The type of housing required within the Borough; and
- The number of dwellings made available elsewhere by the nursing home development.

The following paragraphs will address these comments in turn.

The safety and legibility of the site

7.2.2 The applicant has indicated:

“The existing road that serves the [nursing] home is narrow and takes its access from a small roundabout. Approaching the existing access to the Home from the north involves vehicles turning across the small roundabout. Further, the proximity of the access to the south bound [part of the] carriageway makes manoeuvring from the site difficult. The entrance to the site behind the footway and its juxtaposition to the south bound [part of the] carriageway and the entrance to 104 Park Road poses far greater risk to road users than the proposed new access. Removing the access road...further away from the roundabout will improve visibility and highway safety.”

It is considered, at Paragraph 7.5 below, that there may be no discernible highway benefits to the highway network by the proposal, which is acknowledged by the County Highway Authority, but it is noted that the improved access road width would improve traffic movements within the site. The proposal would also make the nursing home site more legible by being more visible from Park Road if the existing dwelling is demolished. However, it is considered that these benefits would not be sufficient to overcome the concerns over the loss of the residential unit, expressed below.

The existing use of the property and the accommodation available at the nursing home redevelopment

7.2.3 The applicant has indicated that:

“92 Park Road is a four bedroomed house and was purchased by the Caring Homes Group for staff accommodation to service the existing Kingsclear [nursing] home. It has never provided market accommodation or domestic accommodation during the Group’s ownership. Staff for the new care home will be offered help finding accommodation in the area. There is the potential to offer staff accommodation within the new home which is considered ancillary to the use of the care home and would not require a planning application.”

The authorised use of this property is as a residential dwelling (Class C3) and, how ever it has most recently been used, remains as such accommodation, and providing four bedrooms, could be used as family accommodation in the future. The accommodation provided within the nursing home is for overnight (emergency) staff accommodation only, and would not provide all of the facilities to make separate self-contained residential (i.e Class C3) units. Such off-site accommodation will still be needed to be provided for staff of the nursing home.

The type of housing required within the Borough

7.2.4 The applicant has indicated that:

“Policy CP6 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 notes that in Surrey Heath only 105 of all household spaces are classed as small dwellings compared with 36% across the south east. 47% of the Borough housing stock is in the form of detached dwellings, more than twice the national average of 22%. Not only is the mix of housing significantly out of balance, the type of housing required within the Borough is for small units, not large detached houses of which 92 Park Road is one.

It cannot be held that the retention of 92 Park Road will contribute towards an unmet housing need. The requirement on the Council area is for smaller properties, not large detached houses of which there is already an abundance.”

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2014 (SHMA) indicates that there is a need for housing of all sizes with acknowledgment of the role of the delivery of larger residential units can play in releasing the supply of smaller residential properties. In addition, there are relatively substantial numbers of households needing larger properties and they often have to wait longer to be housed because of limited supply. There therefore remains an unmet need for housing of all sizes in the Borough and the loss of the residential dwelling is a retrograde step.

The number of dwellings made available elsewhere by the nursing home development

7.2.5 The applicant has indicated that:

“There are already many elderly people within the Local Authority Area and by 2026 it is expected that the proportion of over 55’s will be 33.9%. As the elderly move into care it will bring a corresponding increase in the amount of housing being released to the general market. The new Kingsclear care home will provide 90 care beds for the elderly. By inference, some of those moving into the home will be from the local area and will be disposing of their existing homes as a consequence of this. The loss of 92 Park Road can also be offset against the increase in the number of housing [units] being freed up by those elderly choosing to move to care.”

The approved care home relates to a net gain of 12 bedrooms over the (now former) nursing home which was previously located on the site. That redevelopment proceeds without the need for this access road (as a part of that development under planning permission SU/14/0562) and therefore the benefits of the larger care home on local housing provision does not transfer to the current proposal. The future projected increase in size of the elderly population in the Borough and the contribution the Kingsclear care home redevelopment is not a reason, in itself, to justify this proposal.

7.2.6 It is therefore considered that the proposal is not acceptable in terms of its principle, failing to comply with Policy CP3 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

7.3 Impact on local character and trees

7.3.1 The current proposal would provide an access road, removing a two storey dwellinghouse in a group of similar properties. It would provide views of the care home (on the site to the rear) and reduce tree cover, including the landscaped belt to the front (previously removed). The application site and the eastern side of Park Road lies

within

the Wooded Hill Character Area which is defined, in the Western Urban Area Character SPD 2012, as having a semi-rural residential character, in part provided by verdant vegetation with large detached dwellings set back in individual plots.

- 7.3.2 Tree Preservation Order 14/70 relates to the frontage strip, which includes some landscaping which has recently been removed. However, there were no protected trees in the group and no objections are raised to the impact on protected trees. The tree report provided with the application indicates that all major trees would be retained with the access road located beyond the root protection areas of these trees. The Council's Arboricultural Officer has raised no objections to the proposal.
- 7.3.3 As indicated by the applicant the proposal would allow greater visibility of the approved care home development from Park Road. Previously, the former care home was not visible from Park Road, and noting its much larger height and scale, very different to the surrounding dwellinghouses. The proposal would make the new care home building more prominent, but noting its setback and the existing vegetation to the site boundaries, would limit the views of the approved building and this relationship would be acceptable.
- 7.3.4 Nevertheless, Park Road is characterised by detached dwellinghouses with similar plot widths and gaps/landscaping between properties (particularly in the vicinity of the application site), providing a rhythm of development which adds to local character. The loss of the dwelling would provide a much larger gap between properties which would be at odds with this prevailing character and would consequently appear as a discordant feature, incongruous in the streetscene. The proposal would also increase the amount of hardstanding clearly visible from the public domain which would erode the soft green semi-rural landscape character of the area.
- 7.3.5 As such, an objection is therefore raised on character grounds, with the proposal failing to comply with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the Western Urban Area Character SPD 2012.

7.4 Impact on residential amenity

- 7.4.1 The nearest residential properties are located adjacent to the property. The proposal would provide an access road within 4.2 metres for the flank boundaries of these properties, with their respective rear gardens. The proposal would add activity and with the changes in levels introduce some minor land raising. However, the gardens are served by 1.8 metre high fences and landscaping, particularly to the boundary with 94 Park Road, and it is considered that any resulting loss of privacy could be mitigated by further planting in the landscaping strips (which is proposed to be up to 7.1 metres in width), by condition if minded to approve.
- 7.4.2 The proposed use would result in an increase in noise and general disturbance from traffic movements (including light) but noting the ambient level of noise from Park Road and activity at the care home, and the separation distances, noted above, and landscaping retained and this impact could be mitigated, by condition, if minded to approve. No objections are raised on these grounds.
- 7.4.3 The existing boundaries would retain fencing. Whilst, it is noted that the access is provided, any impact on the security of neighbouring properties could also be mitigated, by condition, if minded to approve. No objections are raised on these grounds.
- 7.4.4 As such, no objections are raised on residential amenity grounds, with the development complying, in this respect, with Policy DM9 of Surrey Heath Core Strategy and

Development Management Policies 2012.

7.5 Impact on highway safety

- 7.5.1 The applicant has indicated, at Paragraph 7.2.2 above, the highway improvements gained by the proposal. The County Highway Authority has not raised any objections to the proposal and have indicated:

“The existing access while located close to the mini roundabout junction on Park Road is not close enough to have an impact on it. I have checked the accident records which show there have been no personal injury accidents as a result of the use of this access in the last five years. There is good visibility in both directions along Park Road and there are wider footways to either side of the access making it more visible to pedestrians. The proposed replacement access further along Park Road whilst providing adequate geometry and visibility provides no particular highway safety benefits over the existing access.”

The County Highway Authority raises no objections to the proposal on highway safety grounds. It is noted that, whilst the proposal would position the access to the care home further from the roundabout, the proposed access opposite available on-street parking. In addition, the proposed access would serve the same development (as approved under SU/14/0562) and would not, in itself, add to the traffic generation from the care home development. On balance, whilst it is noted that the increase in road width may improve traffic movements within the site, there would appear to be no particular benefit or disbenefit to the proposal to the operation of the highway network generally and highway safety grounds, in particular. As such, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable on highway grounds, complying with Policies CP11 and DM11 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012.

7.6 Impact on drainage and flood risk

- 7.6.1 The application site is 0.09 hectares in size and within a Zone 1 area (low flood risk), where development is not prevented by Policy DM10 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012. The proposal provides a form of development which is under the threshold requirements for consideration from the LLFA. The access road is on a slope and, if minded to approved, drainage measures could be provided by condition to limit any surface flow onto the public highway (and beyond). As such, the proposed development is considered to be acceptable on highway grounds, complying with Policy DM10 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the NPPF.

8.0 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The proposed development is considered to be acceptable in relation to its impact on local character, residential amenity, highway safety drainage and flood risk. However, the proposal is considered to be unacceptable in terms of its principle and is recommended for refusal.

9.0 ARTICLE 2(3) DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCEDURE (AMENDMENT) ORDER 2012 WORKING IN A POSITIVE/PROACTIVE MANNER

In assessing this application, officers have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner consistent with the requirements of Paragraphs 186-187 of the NPPF. This included the following:-

- a) Provided or made available pre application advice to seek to resolve problems before the application was submitted and to foster the delivery of sustainable development.
- b) Provided feedback through the validation process including information on the website, to correct identified problems to ensure that the application was correct and could be registered.

10.0 RECOMMENDATION

REFUSE for the following reason(s):-

1. The loss of the dwellinghouse, which it has not been demonstrated would have benefits which outweigh the harm, would fail to comply with Policy CP3 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework.
2. The eastern side of Park Road lies in the Wooded Hill Character Area defined by its verdant vegetation with large detached dwellings set back in individual plots. The proposed creation of the access and associated large areas of hard surfacing would result in an erosion of this soft green semi-rural character; and, the loss of the dwelling would disrupt the rhythm of built form and appear incongruous in the street scene. As such the development would introduce negative features, failing to respect and enhance the character and quality of the area and contrary to policies CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012, guiding principles WH1 and WH3 of the Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document 2012 and the National Planning Policy Framework 2012.