
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 July 2016

by **Ray Wright** BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 16 August 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/W/16/3148868
School Lane, Windlesham, Surrey GU20 6EY

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr & Mrs Maffre against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/0166, dated 26 February 2015, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2016.
 - The development proposed is 'erection of detached four bedroom dwelling and detached single garage.'
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Application for Costs

1. An application for costs was made by Mr & Mrs Maffre against Surrey Heath Borough Council. This application is the subject of a separate decision.

Procedural Matter

2. At the site visit it was confirmed that the drawings to be considered were not correctly identified on the Council's decision letter. Instead of drawing 2014-1173-PL 3 of 3 (E) there were two drawings 2014-1173-PL 2 of 3 (E) which between them contained full elevations and floor plans together with a street scene elevation.

Decision

3. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

4. The main issues in this case are the effect on the character and appearance of the area and the effect on highway safety.

Reasons

5. The site consists of an open, rough grassed, area of land located between nos 4 and 5 School Lane.

Character and Appearance

6. The National Planning Policy Framework (Framework) indicates that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development. It confirms,
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however, that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development and that development of poor design, which fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area, should be refused. Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath 'Core Strategy & Development Management Policies' 2012 (CS) similarly requires a high quality design, which respects and enhances local character.

7. The properties fronting School Lane include bungalows but are generally two storey cottages of different ages and styles. A number appear to have been extended, with garden outbuildings and independent garages.
8. Those on the side of the Lane adjoining the site consist of two storey, gable fronted, semi-detached cottages. These have a basic original rectangular form with hipped roofs to side additions and rear additions stepping down in scale to the rear.
9. Although the ridge of the roof of the proposed dwelling would only rise to a similar level to its neighbours, I saw no examples of dwellings on three floors as proposed. The dwelling would also extend, at its full ridge height, towards the rear boundary to a significantly greater extent than the adjoining dwellings. It would, therefore, have a considerably greater bulk and mass overall than its neighbours, and the roof light windows and uniform brick finish would add to the perception of its scale.
10. Although the site is within a verdant setting, with trees and hedges to boundaries, the dwelling, as proposed, due to its overall size and form would be obvious in views on approaches along School Lane. To my mind, with its combined height and depth into the site, this detached dwelling would represent a rather strident feature which would be over dominant in this location and significantly out of keeping with the nearby smaller scale cottages.
11. Due to the height and proximity of the main dwelling to the rear boundary the development would also form a conspicuous building from the dwellings and gardens areas in Herrings Lane.
12. I conclude the proposed dwelling, due to its scale and form, would have a materially harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area. As such it would be contrary to the Framework and Policy DM9 of the CS.

Highway Safety

13. The Framework indicates that development should only be prevented on transport grounds where the cumulative impacts of development are severe. Policy DM11 of the CS requires any development which could impact on the safe and efficient flow of traffic movement to include measures to reduce and mitigate such impacts.
14. School Lane is a narrow, unmade track with a slight gradient. The nature of the track is such that vehicle speeds along it, by necessity, are likely to be limited. The traffic generation from the proposed development is indicated to be relatively low, being identified at around 4-6 additional vehicle movements a day. While too narrow for two vehicles to pass, School Lane is of sufficient width to accommodate cars and pedestrians alongside each other. In these circumstances the development would not have significant consequences for the

movement of vehicles or pedestrians or cause any additional, material highway safety issues along its length.

15. However, the existing junction with Chertsey Road is poor and has resulted in earlier schemes for the site being resisted. In this case, to compensate for the additional traffic likely to be generated by the appeal development, various works to the junction of School Lane and Chertsey Road have been put forward, aiming to improve visibility splays and to prevent parking within sight lines.
16. I note a number of local residents have objected to the proposed highway works questioning their need and extent. Different iterations for the works have been put forward and I recognise that, as set out in the comments submitted by the highway authority, and subsequent safety audit, some further amendments to the submitted highways plan are required. However, these alterations and their implementation could be controlled by a condition on any permission granted.
17. The highway authority indicates that the proposed road narrowing of Chertsey Road would provide an appropriate balance between improving visibility at the junction with School Lane, whilst maintaining an acceptable carriageway width on Chertsey Road itself. Furthermore, that the features being introduced as part of the scheme would offer a traffic calming effect. I have no reason to disagree with this assessment and, to my mind, the proposed works would mitigate any effects created by increased traffic movements along School Lane from the proposed development and would generally improve the safety of this junction.
18. Overall, I have no reason to conclude that the development incorporating the highway works proposed would result in any adverse effect on highway or pedestrian safety. I therefore find no conflict with the Framework or Policy DM11 of the CS.

Conclusion

19. Although I have concluded that the proposal would not cause any material highway safety issues, this does not outweigh or negate my concerns regarding the effect on the character and appearance of the area. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Ray Wright

INSPECTOR

