



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 December 2012

by P Jarvis Bsc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 11 January 2013

Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/A/12/2181653

Crinnis, Seafield Road, East Preston, Littlehampton BN16 1NA.

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr C Dench against the decision of Arun District Council.
 - The application Ref EP/136/11, dated 6 December 2011 was refused by notice dated 28 March 2012.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a detached two-storey dwelling of sustainable carbon efficient design together with car parking space and bin storage area.
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Procedural Matter

1. The application is in outline only with all matters reserved. However, the proposal is supported by fully detailed plans showing site layout and full elevations though I have taken these as being indicative only.

Decision

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (a) the character and appearance area, including the Area of Special Character and (b) whether the proposal makes appropriate provision for affordable housing.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises the side garden area of Crinnis, a large detached property which lies on the corner of Seafield Road and Sea Road. Seafield Road is a private road with gated entrance. It is characterised by large detached dwellings set in spacious plots although those on the southern side are noticeably larger and more spacious. Sea Road is more built up and characterised by a mixture of sizes of dwellings some of which are set close to the road frontage.

Effect on character and appearance

5. The proposed plot size, being about a third of the existing site comprising Crinnis House and its grounds, would be significantly smaller than those along Seafield Road, but would not be dissimilar to those located along Sea Road. A

good sized garden area would be retained for the existing dwelling Crinnis which would be commensurate with those on the northern side of Seafield Road. In my opinion the proposed sub-division would not adversely affect the character of Seafield Road, and in this respect, I do not find any conflict with the East Preston Village Design Statement (2008) (VDS) which seeks to retain the relatively large garden areas within this area. This document has been formally adopted by the Council following public consultation and can be given weight as a material consideration.

6. The proposed plot and any dwelling on it would not be readily seen within the context of Seafield Road, but rather would relate to the built pattern of development along Sea Road, which it would front. The plot size would be similar in size to those found along this road and narrow such that any proposed dwelling would inevitably be sited quite close to the road frontage. However, I do not consider that in principle a dwelling on the site would necessarily be incongruous particularly given the generally built up nature and pattern of development along Sea Road which is characterised to an extent by dwellings set very close to the road frontage, albeit not on the western side. In this respect I note that the appellant confirms that the Sea Road frontage falls within a different character area as defined in the VDS.
7. The garage serving Crinnis House is sited within this area but otherwise it provides an open and undeveloped 'green' area in views along Sea Road. However, no long distance views are afforded across it nor does it contain any trees of particular amenity value. In my opinion it currently makes a neutral contribution to the area and its loss would not result in any significant harm to the streetscene.
8. However, although in outline, the proposal is for a two-storey, three bedroom dwelling. The indicative plans show a dwelling of a size and siting which would, in my opinion, be too large for the site, leaving inadequate space about the building and between it and the retained dwelling at Crinnis. Furthermore, insufficient room would be retained to ensure that an appropriate level of planting and landscaping can be reinstated, particularly along the rear (north) boundary of the site and the layout would not provide an adequate garden area for the new dwelling. Thus, on the basis of the information submitted, I am not satisfied that a dwelling of the size proposed could be accommodated on the site, and the proposal would therefore introduce a cramped form of development which would not complement its surroundings.
9. I find therefore that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would thus conflict with Policies GEN7 and AREA1 of the Arun District Local Plan (2003) (LP) which seek development of high quality design and layout which responds to the areas defining characteristics and makes a positive contribution to the Area of Special Character. These policies are generally consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework and therefore in accordance with paragraph 215, significant weight can be afforded to them.
10. I also find that it would conflict with the Framework which seeks development that functions well and adds to the overall quality of the area and resists the development of gardens where it would harm local character.

Affordable housing provision

11. The Council has adopted an Interim Housing Policy in the light of what is an identified significant need and commensurate shortfall in affordable housing. This is set out fully in the Council's supporting evidence which also includes the consideration of economic viability. SEP Policies CC1 and H3 seek the provision of socially inclusive communities and the level of affordable housing is required to be substantially increased by amongst other things the adoption of locally set thresholds. The above local policy sets out that for smaller sites appropriate contributions towards off site provision will be sought and this is usually via a planning obligation agreement.
12. The appellant has confirmed a willingness to enter into a unilateral undertaking to secure the appropriate contribution but it would appear that no completed signed and dated agreement has been provided. In these circumstances the proposal would fail to make appropriate provision towards affordable housing and would thus be contrary to the above policies.

Other Matters

13. The adjoining neighbour to the north has raised concerns with regard to the impact on her property, particularly as a result of the close proximity of the proposed dwelling to the boundary. The dwelling would be sited close to the end of the private garden area to this property but would not be close to the dwelling itself. I consider that an acceptable relationship could be secured through the appropriate siting of windows and given that the dwelling would need to be sited further from the common boundary than indicated on the illustrative plans to provide appropriate amenity and planting areas, it would not result in any significantly adverse effect.
14. I have considered all other matters raised by third parties, including the traffic implications of the proposal but do not consider that these raise further harmful impacts.
15. The proposed dwelling would provide a useful unit of accommodation which would add to housing supply and would be of sustainable construction. However, these benefits are not sufficient to outweigh the harm identified.
16. The appellant has also referred to other nearby sites where permission has been granted for similar forms of development, which I saw on the site visit. However, whilst noting some similarities, I do not consider any of these to be directly comparable with the proposal before me which I have determined on the basis of the particular site characteristics.

Conclusion

17. I conclude for the reasons set out that the appeal should be dismissed.

P Jarvis

INSPECTOR