



# Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2008

**by M A Champion BSc CEng FICE  
FIstructE FIHT FHKIE**

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

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Decision date:  
17 March 2008

**Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/A/07/2058690**

**13 Longdown Road, Lower Bourne, Farnham, GU10 3JT.**

- 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 Ostock Ltd against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
- The application ref: WA/2007/1764, dated 27 July 2007, was refused by notice dated 8 October 2007.
- The development proposed is the construction of a single detached 6/7 bedroom house with conservatory and detached double garage with garden store.

## Decision

1. I dismiss the appeal.

## Reasons

2. I consider that the main issues in this appeal are: firstly, the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area; and, secondly, whether the proposed development makes adequate provision for renewable energy and energy conservation.
3. The appeal site lies in a residential area where Policy SE2 of the Surrey Structure Plan 2004 and Policy BE3 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan, which was adopted in April 2002, deal with renewable energy and energy conservation, and the South Farnham Area of Special Environmental Quality. These Policies have been saved from 27 September 2007 in accordance with a direction from the Secretary of State.
4. My attention has also been drawn to Structure Plan Policy SE4 and Local Plan Policies D1 and D4 which address sustaining the environment, environmental implications of development, and design and layout. These are also "saved" policies.
5. Further details are given as Supplementary Planning Guidance in the Surrey Local Government Association's publication *Surrey Design*. However no evidence has been presented that this was subject to public consultation prior to adoption, and I can therefore attach only limited weight to it.
6. I have been made aware of two previous appeals for development on this site (ref: APP/R3650/A/06/2023617 and APP/R3650/A/07/2034350) dismissed in March 2007 and June 2007 respectively. I shall have regard to these in considering the appeal before me.

*Effect on character and appearance*

7. The appeal site lies within the settlement area of Farnham and I concur with the Council and the previous Inspectors that development is therefore acceptable in principle. The Council do not object to the principle of development, but to the style and design of the development proposed.
8. Government policy as set out in Planning Policy Statements: *1. Delivering Sustainable Development* (PPS1) and *3. Housing* (PPS3) encourages the re-use of previously developed land and development which makes efficient use of land. However, this should not be at the expense of the character and appearance of the area.
9. The particular qualities of the area surrounding the site are recognised by its designation as an Area of Special Environmental Quality (ASEQ) and by Policy BE3 which seeks to protect these qualities.
10. Although the plot sizes of the proposed development and that remaining with Sequoia would be smaller than average for the area, they would not be significantly so. I do not consider that this would necessarily be detrimental in view of the wide range of sizes that occurs, including some particularly large plots.
11. While there are some large dwellings in the area they vary in size but all appear to me to be characterised by the well wooded screening which renders them unobtrusive.
12. I acknowledge that the proposed frontage width, building footprint and the spacing between buildings would not be out of keeping with the area.
13. Nevertheless, the proposed building would be a very large dwelling set forward of the main bulk of Sequoia, and would be highly visible on the street scene in view of the reduced tree screening on the site. It would be, in my opinion, a prominent, bulky building that by reason of its scale, height and mass, exacerbated by a large forward gable, would not integrate well with its semi-rural surroundings. It would be a dominant structure that would fail to be unobtrusive in style and would exhibit no special features to compensate for the loss of retained tree cover.
14. Additionally, the scale and massing of the proposal would affect the ability to reintroduce trees in sufficient quantity to strengthen the character of the area and mitigate the harm caused. While a landscaping scheme could be secured by condition if this appeal were to be allowed, I am not persuaded that the details submitted demonstrate that sufficient planting would be achievable in view of the special character of the ASEQ. In any event such planting would take several years to mature during which time the building would remain exposed.
15. My attention has been drawn to the plot between Sequoia and No 17a on which planning permission has been granted. Although I have few details of the approved development, this site appeared to me to be well screened by trees and hedges, and thus I would expect the development to be relatively unobtrusive.

16. Furthermore, and in view of the number of large plots in the area, I consider that this proposal, if allowed, would lead to pressure for fragmentation of other sites.
17. I conclude on this issue, therefore, that the proposal would adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. It would lead to an erosion of the semi-rural character, be out of keeping with the scale and pattern of surrounding development, detract from the well-wooded appearance of the area, and lead to pressure for the fragmentation of other development, contrary to Policy BE3.

*Renewable energy and energy conservation*

18. Structure Plan SE2 states that all types of development should incorporate energy efficiency best practice measures in their design, and requires residential development to be designed such that a minimum of 10% of the energy requirement is provided by renewable resources. This accords with Government guidance given in PPS1 Supplement: *Planning and Climate Change*.
19. However the supporting text states that implementation will be by way of policies included in local development frameworks (LDFs). As the LDF has not yet been adopted, I can attach only limited weight to Policy SE2.
20. Even if this were not so I consider that a condition for the submission and approval of a scheme for generating 10% of the energy requirement from renewable sources could be imposed were this appeal to be allowed.
21. I conclude on this issue, therefore, that although no evidence has been submitted to demonstrate compliance with Policy SE2, this is insufficient reason to warrant refusal.

*Other Matters*

22. The appellants have submitted a draft unilateral undertaking with respect to the land between the proposed development and Sequoia. However as this is in draft form I attach limited weight to it.
23. Neighbouring residents express their concern at the loss of privacy, daylight and sunlight that would result. The Council do not object in these respects. Having regard to the size and siting of the proposed building in relation to adjoining properties, I do not consider that neighbouring residents would be significantly affected.

**Conclusions**

24. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*M A Champion*  
INSPECTOR

