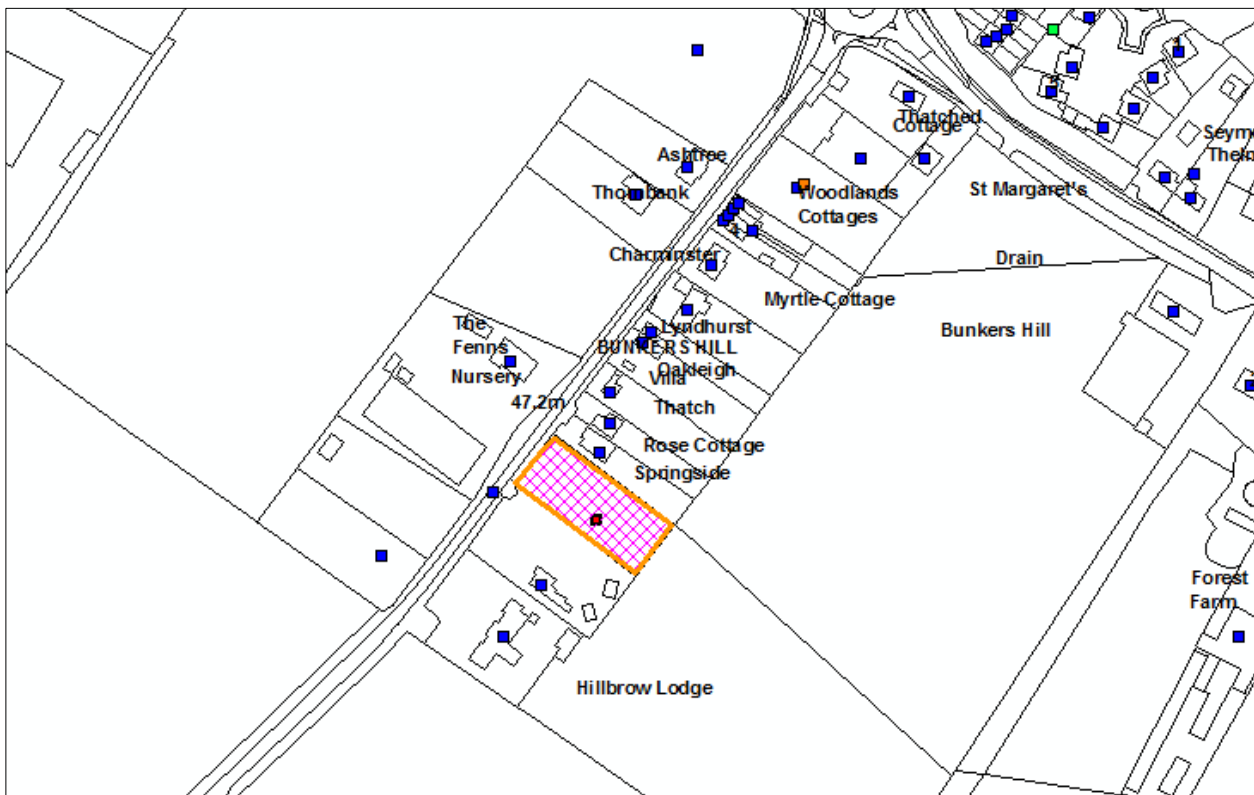


WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Case No: 20/00761/FUL
Proposal Description: Residential development to include 1 no. two storey three bedroom detached house and 2 no. two storey two bedroom semi-detached houses with associated on-site parking and turning area utilising existing highway access off Bunkers Hill.
Address: Land Adjacent To Woodlands Bunkers Hill Denmead Hampshire
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Denmead
Applicants Name: Mr & Mrs Ivor & Caroline Cahill
Case Officer: Liz Marsden
Date Valid: 14 April 2020
Recommendation: Refuse

Link to Planning Documents : <https://planningapps.winchester.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVal=Q8SD0CBPK3H00>

Pre Application Advice: No



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General Comments

The application is reported to Committee due to the number of letters received contrary to the officer recommendation.

Amended plans received 03.06.20. Primary alterations include:

- Alteration to layout of parking area and reduction in number of spaces
- Relocation of plots 2 and 3 further back into site
- Reduction in eaves and ridge height of plot 1 by 0.65m
- Introduction of new tree and hedge planting on frontage of the property

Site Description

The site is an area of 0.13 ha, set on the south east side of Bunkers Hill, where the land rises slightly from north to south. There are no significant features within the site, which is currently laid to grass, but there are oak trees along the road frontage and an area of woodland to the rear with mature hedgerows along both side boundaries. There is an existing vehicular access to the road located in the south western part of the frontage.

The site is located outside the settlement boundary of Denmead, in a belt of open fields that separates the settlement from the extensive woodland, known as Creech Woods, to the south. Despite the line of dwellings that are set along this section of the road, the area has a rural character and appearance which distinguishes it from the built up area.

Proposal

The proposed development comprises the erection of three dwellings in the form of a pair of semi-detached 2 bed houses and a 3 bed detached house set between 18m and 21m from the road. There are 6 parking spaces and a turning area are located on the frontage of the site, using the existing access from Bunkers Hill.

New hedge planting is proposed along the front (north west) and rear (south east) boundaries of the site, with additional tree planting on the frontage. The hedgerows to either side of the plot are to be retained.

Relevant Planning History

There have been a number of applications for the residential development of the site, dating back to 1987, which have been consistently refused. The most recent relevant applications are:

14/01563/FUL – Erection of 1 four bedroom dwelling – Appeal dismissed 19.06.15

14/01564/FUL – Erection of 2 three bedroom dwellings – refused 28.10.14

15/02249/FUL – Removal of existing fencing and replacement with hedging, new access, post and rail fence and gate – Permitted 16.11.15

16/01421/OUT – Construction of a self-build property, to include associated infrastructure and habitat creation area – Refused 23.08.16

Consultations

Service Lead for Environmental Services - Drainage: No Objection

No objection subject to condition requiring detailed proposals of the drainage.

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HCC Highways: No objection

Initial comments requested a plan showing the provision of visibility splays and commented that not all of the parking spaces provided the minimum size requirement. Following the receipt of amended plans there was no objection from a highways perspective, but a condition requiring a bonded strip of at least 1m wide at the access to the development was requested to avoid the transference of loose gravel onto the highway.

Service Lead for Environment – Ecology: No objection subject to adequate management

The site and immediate surroundings are considered suitable to support protected species and further surveys and information requested. These surveys have been carried out and the recommended mitigation would be satisfactory, though it is not certain as to how the wildflower meadow would be managed. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) metric calculation should be provided.

Service Lead for Environment – Trees: No objection

Objection to originally submitted layout on grounds that the parking areas under trees would be likely to lead to future pressure to reduce or fell the trees to avoid nuisance from bird fouling or tree litter falling on the trees. The trees are of a high visual amenity value. The amended plans have addressed these concerns.

English Nature – No objection

Provided that the Council is satisfied that the adopted strategy for addressing nutrient impacts for the development will ensure that the proposal is nutrient neutral and the measures can be fully secured, there are no concerns on this issue.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan should be submitted to ensure that adverse impact on species and habitats is mitigated or avoided.

It is a requirement of all development to enhance the natural environment and an appropriate level of enhancement should be secured as part of the application.

Southern Water – No objection

Whilst current records do not show a sewer crossing the site there is a possibility that this could be the case and if a public sewer is found an investigation will be required and a decision made as to whether it is possible to build over it before any further works commence on site.

Representations:

Denmead Parish Council – Object for the following material planning reasons:

- Contrary to the policies of Denmead Neighbourhood plan and Winchester District Local Plan
- The proposal does not reflect the rural characteristics of the area
- Detrimental impact on the street scene and is in close proximity to Creech Woods
- Proposed parking would not meet the minimum sizes for cars
- Previous refusals on the site

33 letters received from 28 households objecting to the application for the following material planning reasons:

- Development out of context with the rural surroundings and more suited to an

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urban location.

- Contrary to policy
- Would block views of the ancient woodland from the road.
- Scale and height of the development would result in loss of privacy, outlook and light to neighbouring properties.
- Previous refusals for development on this site
- Would set a precedent leading to further infill of sites along Bunkers Hill to the detriment of the character and appearance of the area.
- Overdevelopment of the site.
- Number of parking spaces proposed out of context with the rural setting
- More pressure in the limited facilities in the village
- Adverse impact on the adjacent woodland and the ecology of the area.
- Increased risk of flooding to adjacent properties
- Dangerous access and will be an increased hazard to users of the pavement
- Increased traffic
- Unattractive design
- Unacceptable noise and disturbance to neighbours.
- The village has reached its quota for development and has other sites available for future development.
- Errors and contradictions in the documentation
- Likely to result in pressure to remove trees or result in long term damage to them
- Loss of trees and shrubs will increase levels of carbon dioxide and have an adverse environmental impact

8 letters of support received raising the following material planning reasons:

- Denmead has a sizeable population and should be described as a market town which is subject to greater change and should play its part in providing new homes. At present there is no information to suggest how Denmead will achieve its target of 250 new homes.
- Bunkers Hill relates well to Denmead and is clearly a part of the settlement.
- Off road parking is provided, with adequate lines of sight
- Bunkers Hill is a mixture of styles and size and the proposal will be in keeping with the existing dwellings.
- Much needed housing on a smaller scale
- Good use of otherwise unused land between existing residential properties.
- Will provide more affordable housing.

1 letter received neither objecting to, nor supporting the proposal but commenting that whilst not keen on the design of the properties that the site itself would be appropriate for development.

Relevant Planning Policy:

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy (LPP1)
MTRA1, MTRA4, CP2, CP16, CP20

Winchester Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations (LPP2)
DM1, DM15, DM16, DM18, DM23, DM24

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National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:
National Planning Policy Framework

Supplementary Planning Guidance
Denmead Neighbourhood Plan (DNP)
High Quality Design

Planning Considerations

Principle of development

Paragraph 47 of the NPPF requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The site does not fall within an area covered by Policy MTRA3 of LPP1, where the infilling of small plots may be acceptable, as it is located outside the settlement boundary of Denmead. Where there is a settlement boundary, which has been confirmed by the adoption of the Local Plan Part 2 - Development Management and Site Allocations (LPP2), the intention is to ensure that new development is located within the boundary and to avoid the further encroachment of the built-up area into the countryside. The proposed dwellings would therefore be contrary to Policy MTRA4 of LPP1 and Policy 1 of the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan which directs future development in the parish to the settlement of Denmead

Policy CP2 of the Local Plan Part 1 considers housing mix requires that there should be a majority of 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings, unless local circumstances indicate an alternative approach should be taken. In this case all the dwellings are either 2 or 3 bed units and therefore compliant with this policy.

The development has a density of 23 dwellings per hectare.

Design/layout

The layout of the proposal seeks to maximise the development potential of the plot. The houses are set back from the frontage of the site and slightly staggered so that they form a transition in the building line of this part of Bunkers Hill, between Springside which is set closer to the Road and Woodlands which is set further back. Similarly there is a slight difference in height between the buildings which reflects the slope of the hill, with the ridge height of the detached property having been reduced so that it is not significantly higher than Springside. Parking and turning spaces are provided between the road and the front elevations.

The houses are of a standard scale and size, though the design of the fenestration and use of a variety of materials would give them a contemporary appearance, possibly more appropriate to an urban setting than this rural location. The materials to be used have been specified, comprising a combination of render and fibre-cement cladding and roof covering, and are not of the quality that would generally be expected of new development or sympathetic to the context of the surrounding area as required by 'High Quality Places'.

Impact on character of area

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Existing development along Bunkers Hill is characterised by a variety of house types and design though, with the exception of a row of narrow terraced properties at the northern end of the road, the dwellings are set in sizeable plots, generally increasing in area to the south away from the settlement. This allows views between the buildings to the countryside and woodland beyond. The resulting spacious and rural appearance is appropriate to the inclusion of this area, which has been assessed as having a moderate landscape sensitivity, within the countryside.

The proposal would introduce three dwellings set close together resulting in a dense form of development that is contrary to the established pattern of the area and which would reduce the visual gap between the existing properties, detracting from the spacious characteristics and appearance of this area to the detriment of its rural character and contrary to policy DM23 of LPP2. It is also contrary to Policy 1 of the DNP, which seeks to protect the rural character of the village and surrounding open countryside by confining encroachment into landscape areas assessed as being the least sensitive to new development.

Impact on neighbour amenity

The primary impact would be on the immediate neighbour to the north, Springside. This property is set close to the boundary with the application site and has a number of windows and a door at ground floor level in its southern elevation. There is a further window at first floor level. The new dwelling on plot 1 would be located 6.7m from the nearest part of Springside and set back so that its front elevation is roughly in line with the rear of the two-storey section of that property. The windows and door in this part of the house would therefore look out directly over the frontage of the site, rather than onto the side wall of the proposal.

The proposed dwelling would be in line with the single storey extension to the rear of Springside, where the window in the side elevation would have a direct view of the side of the new building, resulting in slight loss of outlook. The location of the new dwellings to the south east of Springside could also result in some shading to windows of that house. However, given the distance between the properties it is not considered that the proposal would be unduly overbearing or lead to significant loss of direct light so as to have a significant impact on the residential amenities of the occupants of that property. A reason for refusal on this basis would not therefore be sustainable.

There is small window at first floor level, serving a landing, in the north eastern elevation of plot 1 and bathroom windows in the side elevations of plots 2 and 3. If the application was acceptable in other respects these could be conditioned to be obscure glazed in order to ensure that there is no loss of privacy through overlooking of neighbouring properties.

The dwelling to the south of the site, 'Woodlands', is set around 14m from the house on plot 3 and at a sufficient distance to ensure that there would not undue impact through loss of outlook.

Landscape/Trees

Concerns were raised by the Tree officer about the provision of parking spaces with the crown spreads of trees along the frontage, which could lead to pressure for works to reduce or remove the trees, due to the impact of falling tree debris. This has been addressed by a relocation of the houses and a reduction in overall number of parking

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spaces. The development could therefore be accommodated on this site without adversely affecting the well-being and long term retention of the protected trees.

Highways/Parking

The access has been confirmed as acceptable by the Highways authority and parking spaces are provided in accordance with the council's standards for residential development.

Ecology.

Additional surveys have been carried out following the initial comments of the Ecology officer and a report submitted which sets out a number of mitigation measures. It is accepted that, providing that these measures were implemented the development could take place without adverse impact on ecology. However, insufficient information has been provided, particularly in terms of how the wildflower meadow could be managed in perpetuity. Additionally a BNG metric calculation should be produced to show what has been lost against what is proposed. These issues are capable of being overcome and do not warrant a reason for refusal, but would need to be controlled by means of a condition should the application be permitted

Nitrates

The site is located in an area where Natural England has raised concern regarding the continued discharge of nitrates and phosphorus (nutrients) due to its proximity to and impact, resulting from eutrophication, on the Solent water environment, recognised as being internationally important for its wildlife and safeguarded by Special Protection Area designations. In relation to this proposal a Nitrate budget has been submitted, which demonstrates that the development would result in additional nitrogen being released into the sewerage system and appropriate mitigation will be required in order to achieve the neutrality that is required.

The applicants have agreed to the Grampian condition, set out in the Council's Position Statement on nitrate neutral development. An Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken in accordance with regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and policy CP16 of the Local Plan Part 1 and subject to the provision of these mitigation measures the development will not result in an adverse impact on the ecology of the area and is therefore acceptable in this respect.

Other Matters

Due regard should be given to the Equality Act 2010: Public Sector Equality Duty. Public bodies need to consciously think about the three aims of the Equality Duty as part of the process of decision-making. The weight given to the Equality Duty, compared to the other factors, will depend on how much that function affects discrimination, equality of opportunity and good relations and the extent of any disadvantage that needs to be addressed. The Local Planning Authority has given due regard to this duty and the considerations do not outweigh any matters in the exercise of our duty.

Conclusion

The proposal would be contrary to policies for the protection of the countryside in that it would result in the provision of new residential dwellings, for which there is no overriding

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justification. The density of the development would be out of keeping with and detrimental to the character and appearance of the area.

Recommendation

Refuse for the following reasons:

1. The proposed development would represent an undesirable residential development in the countryside for which there is no over riding justification contrary to Policy MTRA4 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy.
2. The proposed development would be situated outside of the settlement boundary of Denmead and would conflict with the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan (made 2015) and be prejudicial to the spatial plan for the parish as set out in Policy 1.
3. The proposed dwellings would result in the consolidation of an isolated ribbon of development within the countryside which would be harmful to the overall character and appearance of the local area, detrimentally impacting on the semi-rural nature of the landscape contrary to Policy DM23 of the Winchester District Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations. Furthermore, it would set a precedent which would make it difficult to resist further intensification of development in this area, cumulatively causing more harm.

Informatives:

1. In accordance with paragraphs 186 and 187 of the NPPF, Winchester City Council (WCC) take a positive and proactive approach to development proposals, working with applicants and agents to achieve the best solution. To this end WCC:
 - offer a pre-application advice service and,
 - update applicants/agents of any issues that may arise in the processing of their application, where possible suggesting alternative solutions.In this instance there have been discussions with the applicants to address some of the concerns raised.
2. The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-
 - Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy: MTRA1, MTRA4, CP2, CP16, CP20
 - Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations: DM1, DM15, DM16, DM18, DM23, DM24
 - Denmead Neighbourhood Plan. Policy 1.