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## Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 October 2018

by **Benjamin Webb BA(Hons) MA MA MSc PGDip(UD) MRTPI IHBC**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8<sup>th</sup> November 2018

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**Appeal Ref: APP/Y9507/W/18/3201578**

**28 and 29 Churchfields, Twyford SO21 1NN**

- 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 R Powter against the decision of South Downs National Park Authority.
  - The application Ref SDNP/17/04754/FUL, dated 16 September 2017, was refused by notice dated 21 March 2018.
  - The development proposed is a new detached two-storey dwelling.
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### Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

### Procedural Matters

2. The site includes part of the garden of 29 Churchfields. For this reason I have amended the address above from that given on the planning application form to include reference to No 29.
3. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) came into force during the course of the appeal. The parties have been given the opportunity to comment on the implications of the guidance on the appeal, and I have also taken it into account in determining the appeal.

### Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area, including the South Downs National Park (the National Park).

### Reasons

5. 28 Churchfields forms one half of a pair of semi-detached dwellings; the first building on the south side of a small development arranged around a central green. The development consists of 2 types of semi-detached houses, and includes a small number of bungalows. Though the external finish of some dwellings on the south side of the green has been altered, buildings otherwise match, are aligned, and feature generous regular spacing. This provides a distinctive uniform appearance and gives the layout a spacious character.
6. The development around the green remains appreciably distinct from that around The Crescent to the south. The latter includes the building of which No 29 forms part, which, notwithstanding modifications to the west elevation, is roughly orientated in the opposite direction to No 28. The separate character of

- the 2 developments is identified within the Twyford Character Assessment 2016, and is reinforced on the ground by the bend in Churchfields adjacent to the appeal site. Within this context the proposed dwelling would be primarily viewed in association with No 28 and development arranged around the green.
7. The proposed development would entail construction of compact detached dwelling of irregular form, on an irregular tapering plot, the size of which would be noticeably smaller than that of other dwellings along the south side of the green. Though a broad frontage would be provided, the dwelling would be positioned uncharacteristically close to the gable end of No 28, and similarly close to a single storey structure attached to No 29. This atypical positioning, combined with the immediate backdrop provided by the rear/side elevations of No 29, and 5 The Crescent, would provide an excessively cramped appearance, acutely at odds with the existing spacious character of development along the south side of the green. The proposed dwelling would as such appear incongruous within the streetscene, and the adverse effect would be amplified by the prominent positioning of the dwelling at the beginning of the sequence around the green.
  8. Whilst the appellant references the similar size of the plot on which 30 Churchfields is positioned, I note that this has a more regular shape, and that substantially larger gaps exist between it and neighbouring dwellings. Furthermore both the design and immediate setting differ. As such the effects are not comparable.
  9. The appellant claims that the proposed design would appear more architecturally interesting than that of original dwellings along Churchfields. A 'contemporary' style has been similarly employed at No 30, and in modifications to the west elevation of No 29. However neither forms part of the streetscene within which the proposed dwelling would be principally viewed. Significant differences in the shape, size and proportions of the proposed dwelling relative both to the semi-detached pair of No 28 forms part, and matching buildings on the south side of the green, would, in my opinion, act to further accentuate the incongruous appearance of the proposed development.
  10. I have had regard to the purposes of the National Park designation, and advice in paragraph 172 of the Framework to give great weight to the conservation and enhancement of landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks. Though the site would be at least partially visible from an adjacent area of open green space it would be viewed firmly in the context of other existing housing development. As such the proposed development would not cause harm to either the character or appearance of the landscape, or scenic beauty of the National Park, and would not otherwise conflict with the purposes of the designation.
  11. Whilst I conclude therefore that the development would not conflict with Policy CP19 of the Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy 2013, which seeks to secure development in keeping with the context and the setting of the landscape and settlements of the National Park, it would nonetheless have an unacceptably adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area. This would conflict with Policy DP3 of the Winchester District Local Plan Review 2006, which amongst other things seeks to secure development whose scale and layout responds positively to the character, appearance and variety of the local environment.

### **Other Matters**

12. Refusal of the planning permission was made by Council members against the recommendation of their officer. Council members are not however bound to follow such recommendations.
13. I have had regard to the advice in paragraph 68 the Framework which states that great weight should be given to the benefits of using suitable sites within existing settlements for homes. Advice regarding efficient use of land in paragraph 122 however draws attention to the importance of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting, reflecting more general advice within the Framework regarding design. Given the harm to the character and appearance of the area that I have identified, the appeal scheme does not demonstrate the site's suitability for the proposed development, and as such paragraph 68 does not alter my view of the appeal scheme.
14. The Council's appeal statement raises a number of concerns regarding potential adverse effects on the living conditions of future occupants and neighbours. These did not form part of the Council's reasons for refusal, and nor were they recorded in the Committee minutes. Given my conclusion regarding the main issue however, these are not matters I need to address further.

### **Conclusion**

15. For the reasons set out above, and with regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

*Benjamin Webb*

INSPECTOR