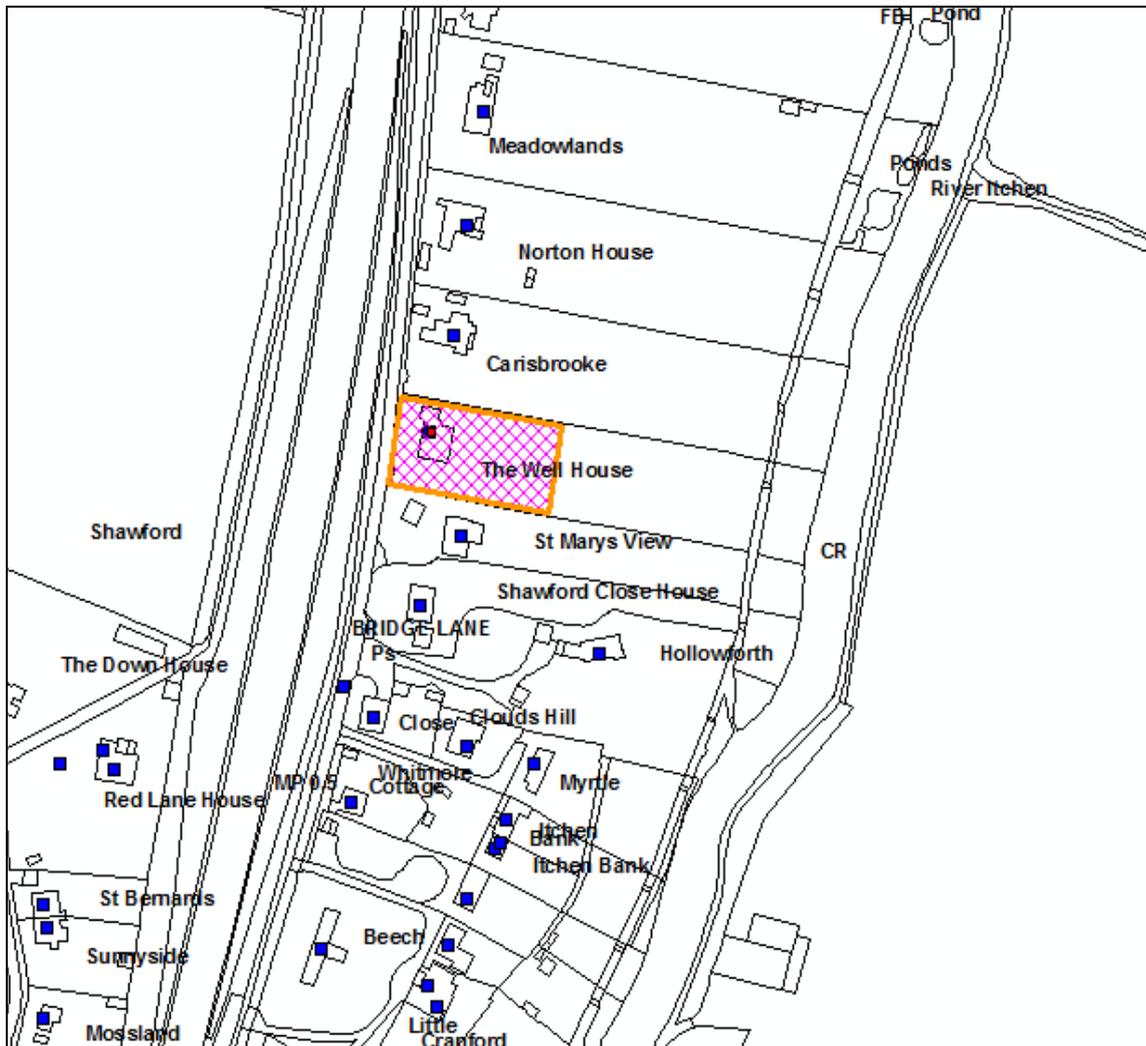


WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
PLANNING COMMITTEE

Case No: 18/02792/FUL
Proposal Description: Demolition of existing building with replacement dwelling
Address: The Well House, Bridge Lane, Shawford, SO21 2BL.
Parish, or Ward if within Winchester City: Compton And Shawford
Applicants Name: Mr & Mrs Walsh
Case Officer: Catherine Watson
Date Valid: 6 December 2018
Recommendation: Application Refused



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General Comments

The application is reported to Committee due to the number of letters of support, contrary to the officer's recommendation to refuse.

Site Description

The existing dwelling is a two storey detached property situated within a spacious plot on Bridge Lane, Shawford with views towards the Itchen Navigation and across Twyford Down. The village of Shawford is located approx. 3km south of Winchester, but does not have a settlement boundary as defined in policy MTRA3 of Local Plan Part 1.

The plot is linear in form, sloping down from the Bridge Lane frontage to the Itchen Navigation, a watercourse forming part of the River Itchen SSSI.

Proposal

The proposal is for the demolition of the existing dwelling and for its replacement with a large, contemporary style dwelling which extends down the sloping garden and includes areas of hard landscaping, including paved terraces and pool to the rear and a forecourt and courtyard garden to the front.

Relevant Planning History

09/01383/FUL - Single storey side extension to replace existing conservatory. PERMITTED.

08/00553/FUL - Single storey side extension to replace existing conservatory. PERMITTED.

00/02618/FUL - 1.8m high boundary wall & railings. PERMITTED.

Consultations

Engineers: Drainage:

The site is in Flood Zone 1 and is at very low risk of flooding, with chalk geology. A foul sewer is available to the rear of the property for foul drainage and it would be beneficial to local this sewer in case a diversion is required. Surface water drainage details are required showing that storage for a 1 in 100 year storm event, plus an allowance for climate change can be provided. Hardstandings should be permeable where possible.

Engineers: Highways:

The proposal does not contain any significant highways issues and is unlikely to impact on highway safety.

Head of Landscape:

Whilst its bulk and height are less than the existing house, its style and appearance do not sit comfortably with either the pattern of building on Bridge Lane and elsewhere in the village or its landscape setting.

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Policy DM15 requires that development should respect the qualities, features and characteristics that contribute to the distinctiveness of the local area and the local Village Design Statement requires that all development should “reflect and respect the character of the local area”.

The proposed new dwelling would not be in keeping with its context and landscape setting and would appear out of place, unduly prominent and harmful in views from the riverside footpath and the National Park. This would be exacerbated at night if light was emanating from the large areas of glazing to the rear. The proposal fails to contribute to the distinctiveness of the village and cannot be supported.

Natural England:

The application is within close proximity to the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). There are concerns that the proposals, without suitable mitigation, may have adverse impacts upon the River Itchen during the construction phase. To mitigate the impacts during the construction phase, a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should be submitted to and approved in writing by the district ecologist and this should be controlled by condition.

The development presents the opportunity for the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) which will help to reduce the level of surface storm water runoff. Should the application be recommended for approval, a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) should be undertaken to rule out Likely Significant Effects.

The site is close to a nationally designated landscape (South Downs National Park). National and Local policies should be used and the decision should be guided by Para. 172 of the NPPF. The application should be assessed as to whether the development would have a significant impact on or harm the statutory purposes of the National Park.

South Downs National Park Authority:

The proposed development would be visible from the National Park from both close range and long distance views, including the Itchen Way long distance walking route. The Council should be satisfied that the proposed new dwelling, materials and landscaping suitably responds to its context and landscape setting and would “not appear out of place, unduly prominent or harmful in views from the National Park”.

The National Park is a designated International Dark Sky reserve and dark skies and tranquillity are a special quality of the National Park which need to be protected. It is noted that large expanses of glazing are currently proposed on the east elevation of the dwelling, a significant increase in comparison to the existing dwelling. This glazing and associated light spill could be prominent in night time views from the National Park and it is requested that consideration is given to reducing the amount of glazing or the use of low transmittance/tinted glazing. It is noted that external lighting will be kept to a minimum and will be directional or hooded as required, which is welcomed. The Council must ensure that there is no harm caused to the internationally important habitat of the River Itchen SAC and SSSI and the specialist views of Natural England should be sought.

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Representations:

Compton and Shawford Parish Council

- A neutral stance would be taken by the Parish Council. It is strongly recommended that the Planning Committee add a criteria with regards to contractor's traffic. The road is very narrow and has few parking areas, most of which are used by station traffic. Access should be maintained for the residents and contractors should park on site. Any damage to the road should be repaired by the contractor.

Twyford Parish Council

- Whilst the site is not within the parish boundary, there are views of it from within the parish. Of particular concern is the size of the three rear windows and the proposal would represent a very visible change to the current domestic setting. It would also impact upon the SAC and setting of the National Park and public rights of way.

15 letters from 13 addresses received objecting to the application for the following reasons:

- Loss of an attractive Edwardian home;
- The design and materials are not appropriate for the location;
- The road is narrow and there are likely to be problems from builders traffic;
- If permitted, this would set a design precedent for the rest of the village.

9 letters received in support of the application for the following reasons:

- A bold, contemporary design;
- Less obtrusive than the existing dwelling.

1 letter neither supporting nor objecting to the application.

Relevant Planning Policy:

Winchester Local Plan Part 1 – Joint Core Strategy
DS1, MTRA1, MTRA3, CP13, CP16, CP19, CP20.

Winchester Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations.
DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM23, DM24

National Planning Policy Guidance/Statements:
National Planning Policy Framework

Supplementary Planning Guidance
Compton and Shawford Village Design Statement
High Quality Places SPD

Other Planning guidance
Winchester District Landscape Assessment

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Planning Considerations

Principle of development

The proposal is for the demolition of an existing dwelling and construction of a replacement dwelling and associated hard and soft landscaping. The principle of a replacement dwelling within the countryside is acceptable in principle, subject to compliance with relevant planning policy.

Design/layout

The existing dwelling, constructed in the late 19th/early 20th century is a two storey, detached house with mock Tudor gable details, red brick walls and slate roof covering. It has been extended at various times in the past however, retains a relatively compact footprint in relation to the rest of the plot. To the front is an area of hardstanding used for vehicular parking and which can be accessed through one of the two entrances to the site. Along the front boundary, between the two accesses, runs a traditionally detailed brick and flint wall. To the rear of the house, the garden has been terraced down towards the river, with an area of patio immediately adjacent to the rear elevation and lawn, interspersed with shrubbery and mature trees along the boundaries.

The proposed dwelling is a low profile, two storey detached property of a highly contemporary design. To the front of the plot, it is set back from the existing building line of the existing dwelling and presents a single storey to the street. The elevation takes the form of a centrally recessed element with a wing on either side. To the front of this is a large area of hardstanding with soft landscaped areas adjacent to the front brick boundary wall, which is to be retained, and to either side boundary inside the two accesses.

To the rear, the building becomes two storey as it extends down the slope. Three large feature windows are proposed for the rear elevation which take a “box” form and have recessed glazing. The immediate space to the rear of the dwelling is given over to areas of terrace and an outdoor swimming pool.

Proposed materials include weathered bronze for the three rear first floor boxes, striated concrete for the ground floor and a flat sedum roof.

The existing dwelling has a gross external floor area (GEA) of 534.3sqm, whilst the proposed has a GEA of 584.2sqm – an increase of 49.9sqm or 9.3%.

Whilst it is acknowledged that the proposed dwelling is in itself of a high quality design, it is not considered that it is contextually appropriate for this site in terms of its appearance, form, massing and spread across the site. Additionally, the significant areas of hard landscaping and associated domestic paraphernalia, are not considered to be an appropriate use of the plot and do not enhance the semi-rural nature of the surrounding area.

The existing dwelling, although previously extended, retains a relatively well defined footprint and is situated in close proximity to the front boundary, with comparatively small areas of hardstanding to front and back and is considered to preserve the open and verdant nature of the plot.

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Conversely, the mass of the proposed dwelling extends across almost the entire width of the plot. The 9% increase in floor area, whilst it could be argued is not great, is exacerbated by the spread of buildings and associated hard landscaping and other residential development, across the width and length of the site.

The proposed dwelling is set further back into the plot, which increases the space to the front. Because of this, there is a disproportionate amount of paved area, with only limited areas of planting to soften it.

It is therefore not considered that the proposal is acceptable in terms of the impact of its design, scale, form and massing on the existing plot.

Impact on character of area and neighbouring property

Bridge Lane is a linear street running from Shawford Road, the main road through the village, and terminating in an unmade track which links to a public right of way. Development is restricted to the eastern side of the road and to the west, runs the main London to Poole railway line.

Whilst there is some backland development towards the southern end of the street, mostly consisting of bungalows and small cottages, the majority of the dwellings are set to the front of large, linear plots which slope eastwards towards the Itchen Navigation and Twyford Down. Towards the northern end of the street, where it becomes unmade, houses have been set further back from the road however, the plots are substantially smaller than those in the central area, where the building line is of a regular nature and therefore have a different character.

The predominant form of the existing dwellings is of two storey detached properties of traditional proportions and spanning a date range between the late 19th and early 21st centuries. The applicant has not identified a prevailing character of development along Bridge Lane.. Whilst there is some individual variation in form and design details and finishing, as is to be expected on a series of dwellings constructed over a period of more than a century, it is clear that there is a prevailing pattern of development which follows a similar orientation of two storey dwellings facing the street and boundary treatments consisting of low brick and flint walls with supplementary planting. This linear planning layout is confirmed in the Compton and Shawford VDS as being typical throughout the parish and the strongly verdant setting also contributes significantly to the distinct character of the Lane..

The proposed development is therefore not considered to respect the character of the street scene, both in terms of its low height, spread across the width of the site and setback from the street frontage. The contextual analysis submitted by the applicant is not considered to address these key issues.

The VDS also states that "Building materials should be sympathetic with neighbouring properties and be in harmony with the character of the area" (C.4, p.18) and the High Quality Places SPD states that whilst contemporary materials can be effective, they should be carefully related to the context (para 7.55, p. 75). The applicant's Design and Access statement states that the proposed materials pick up on the tones of those used in the area which it identifies primarily as red brick with clay tiles or slate roofing. It states that the proposed weathered bronze cladding with its reddish brown tones ties in with the

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existing. Whilst this material can have a high quality appearance, it is not considered appropriate in this setting. Neither does the proposed striated concrete pick up on any of the materials used throughout the rest of the street.

The applicant maintains that the low profile of the building along the road frontage allows views from users of the road, above the dwelling and across to Twyford Down. Views from the street, other than through the gaps between buildings, are not a characteristic of Bridge Lane. Instead, the houses take advantage of these views from the rear of their homes where they can be enjoyed at leisure and it is not considered that the potential views afforded by the low profile of the proposed dwelling give any significant wider public benefit. Policy CP13 of LPP1 states that development will be permitted where it can be demonstrated that an analysis of the constraints and opportunities of the site and its surroundings have informed the principles of the design and that the design details respond positively to its neighbours and the local context. It is not considered that the proposed development complies with this policy.

To the rear the proposed dwelling has an imposing appearance, with the three large window “boxes” being a distinctive feature. It is recognised that the applicant wishes to maximise his outlook across the beautiful landscape however, the box forms are not considered to be an appropriate response to this desire. The bold, contemporary appearance is not in keeping with the character of the rear views of the plots from the Itchen Footpath and from further afield and would appear to be incongruous in such views. Furthermore, the dwelling makes no effort to address the sloping nature of the site, with the first floor level to the rear and ground floor level to the front being set at the same height. The significant areas of hard landscaping, including terraces and a pool, further emphasise the increase in built form within the plot, contrary to the prevailing character.

Landscape/Trees

The Landscape Officer acknowledged the quality of the building, but considered it to sit uncomfortably within the street scene, the village and the surrounding landscape.

The key factor is the impact upon the setting of the South Downs National Park, the boundary of which starts to the west across the Itchen Navigation. The SDNPA commented that it required further information, including a photomontage of what the likely views would be when seen from Twyford Down, which is within the National Park. It was not considered expedient for the applicant to provide this given the Council’s fundamental objection to the form and design of the proposed development.

Concerns were raised with regards to external lighting. The SDNP is a designated Dark Sky reserve and any external lighting should be kept to a low level of luminance. The applicant proposes to comply with this and ensure that any lighting is hooded. The large areas of glazing to the rear are likely to transmit light from within the dwelling and are therefore considered to harm the special qualities of the National Park.

The site is within the Lower Itchen Valley Landscape Character Area and the views across Twyford Down towards Shawford are mentioned as a key characteristic. The Built Form Strategies (Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment, p. 122) in this area include the following:

- Conserve local traditional building form and materials, such as red brick, white colour washed brick, flint, clay plain tiles and promote their use in any new development.

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- Protect and enhance the rural setting of settlements within the character area, by resisting inappropriate development or development in unsuitable locations.

It is not considered that the proposed development accords with these strategies, nor with policy DM15 of LPP2, which states that development should respect the qualities, features and characteristics that contribute to the distinctiveness of the local area, as well as conserving or enhancing recognised public views and features. DM23 states that development will not be permitted if it has an unacceptable effect on the rural character by means of visual or physical intrusion or any impact upon the tranquillity of the area.

Policy CP20 of LPP1 states that particular emphasis should be given to conserving recognised built form and natural landscapes that include features and elements of natural beauty, as well as local distinctiveness, especially in terms of characteristic materials, trees, built form and layout, tranquillity, sense of place and setting.

For the reasons discussed above, the proposed development is not considered to comply with these policies.

A number of trees will be removed to facilitate the development, including a large western red cedar along the boundary with St Mary's View to the south, which is subject to a TPO. This tree has been labelled as a Category B tree in the applicant's Arboricultural Survey and has an expected life of 30+ years. No evidence has been given as to why it is deemed acceptable to remove this tree, other than to facilitate the development, and it is considered that the tree is an important part of the character of the area, being visible from Bridge Lane.

Ecology and Biodiversity

The site is within close proximity of the River Itchen SAC and SSSI, which is nationally and internationally designated for its ecological value. Any development would have the potential to impact harmfully upon the watercourse and therefore, mitigation and protection measures should be put into place during and after the construction process. Natural England as the statutory consultee advised that should the officer be minded to permit the application, a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should be submitted prior to determination to ensure that no harm is caused to the designated watercourse by means of runoff, dust and noise during the construction process and after occupation. Natural England also required the LPA to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment to demonstrate that it was satisfied that less than significant harm would be caused to the designated watercourse. As the LPA was minded to refuse the application on other grounds, this has not been progressed and a reason for refusal is therefore recommended.

As part of the submission, a Bat Survey was undertaken by the applicant which recorded several species of bat traversing the site. It was considered that the existing dwelling held some possibility of bat access and evidence within the loft space was discovered. The surrounding trees were considered to be of value for foraging bats and it was recommended that bat boxes be installed on the new dwelling to provide suitable roosting habitat.

Highways/Parking

Adequate parking in the form of hardstanding and garaging has been provided on site and the Highways Officer did not consider that there would be any significant highway

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safety issues.

It is noted that should any development take place on the site, the narrow width of Bridge Lane, which is also a cul-de-sac, would require that a Construction Management Plan be submitted ensuring that contractors' vehicles be able to park and turn safely on site and any impact upon the road surface is minimised.

Recommendation

Application Refused, subject to the following condition(s):

01 The proposed replacement dwelling and associated development is considered to be unacceptable in terms of its impact upon the character of Bridge Lane and the wider surrounding landscape and designated features, including the South Downs National Park and River Itchen SSSI and SAC, as well as nearby public rights of way.

The proposal represents an incongruous form of development with regards to its design, form, massing and materials which does not respect the features of the Landscape Character Area, as identified in the Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment and is contrary to Policies DS1, MTRA1, MTRA3, CP13, CP16, CP19, CP20 of Local Plan Part 1 adopted 2013; DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM23, DM24 of Local Plan Part 2 adopted 2017, and the High Quality Places SPD.

02 The proposal is contrary to Policy CP16 of Local Plan Part 1 adopted 2013 as it fails to provide a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) showing mitigation and protection measures to ensure that no harm is caused to the designated watercourse by means of runoff, dust and noise during the construction process and after occupation, thereby having a harmful impact on the River Itchen SAC and SSSI, which is nationally and internationally designated for its ecological value.

Informatives:

1.

In accordance with paragraph 38 of the NPPF (July 2018), 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 a site meeting was carried out with the applicant.

2.

The Local Planning Authority has taken account of the following development plan policies and proposals:-

Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy: DS1, MTRA1, MTRA3, CP13, CP16, CP19, CP20.

Local Plan Part 2 – Development Management and Site Allocations: DM15, DM16, DM17, DM18, DM23, DM24

High Quality Places SPD

Compton and Shawford VDS

Winchester District Landscape Character Assessment

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