



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 June 2022

by Kim Langford Tejrar LLB (Hons) BSc (Hons) PGDIP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 22 August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L3815/W/21/3283094

Oxencroft, Ifold Bridge Lane, Loxwood RH14 0UJ

- 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 David Stephens against the decision of Chichester District Council.
 - The application Ref PS/21/00077/FUL, dated 11 January 2021, was refused by notice dated 19 March 2021.
 - The development proposed is 'New entrance gate at Oxencroft (retrospective)'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is an agricultural property located along Ifold Bridge Lane, which is a narrow rural lane. There are a mix of rural enterprises and residential properties along Ifold Bridge Lane, although the latter are predominantly set-back from the road and thus Ifold Bridge Lane has a strong rural character. Entrances to the various sites are modest and unobtrusive. Residential paraphernalia is not a particular feature of the immediate area.
4. The appeal proposal seeks to retrospectively regularise the installation of timber double-gates and brick piers at the entrance to Oxencroft. The gates and piers are in situ, having replaced a timber five-bar gate and barbed wire. The brick piers are substantial in both depth and height; they have a massive appearance which is incongruous with the vernacular unobtrusive timber posts. This is exacerbated by the suburban design of the piers and gates and their prominence at the roadside, which is out of keeping with the particularly rural and isolated character of the area.
5. The Appellant has referred to other examples of similar gates. All the gates referred either do not have brick piers or are not so substantial in scale as the appeal proposal. Moreover, several are sited in residential areas and are therefore in keeping with their built context. Their prominence also appears to be conversant with the prominence of the dwellings to which they relate. As such, these other examples are not comparable to the appeal proposal in respect of their scale, design and siting.

6. The Appellant has also referred to an appeal decision which allowed replacement of a set of timber 5-bar gates with solid timber gates at The Forestry Road, at some distance from the appeal site. No details as to the design of the gates allowed at this appeal has been provided, although the appeal decision refers only to sculpted-top timber gates and not piers or walls. The character of the area immediately surrounding that appeal site is also a narrow rural lane, however, there is a prevalence of sporadic yet prominent gateway entrances leading to residential properties and other residential paraphernalia in the area. On this basis, the individual circumstances of that appeal are not comparable to the current appeal scheme, both in terms of design, scale and the character of the location.
7. It is noted that there is a current prior notification application to convert an agricultural building to a dwelling within the appeal site. However, a change in the nature of the use of the site would not justify the starkly suburban entrance treatment. Residential properties in the vicinity have low-key modest entrances and the character of the area remains rural.
8. The gates and gate piers would provide some additional security for the site above the previous timber 5-bar arrangement. However, I am not convinced that a similar benefit could not arise from an entrance treatment which is more in keeping with the character of the area. The benefit of added security does not outweigh the disbenefit of the harm to the character and appearance of the area. Further, the previous arrangement of 5-bar gate and wire is the vernacular of a rural area, and it does not appear severe in such a context.
9. For these reasons, the proposal is contrary to policies 25, 45 and 48 of the Chichester Local Plan, adopted in 2015, and the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). These policies seek, amongst other things, development of a good design which conserves or enhances the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside.

Conclusions

10. For the reasons stated above, I find that the appeal proposal is contrary to the relevant policies of the Development Plan. The appeal is accordingly dismissed.

Kim Langford Tejrar

INSPECTOR