

APP/15/00425 – Land r/o 1 Grove Road, Havant P09 1AR

This application follows permissions granted for the redevelopment of land to the rear of South Street fronting Twittens Way and land to the rear of 3 Grove Road. The applicant is understandably arguing that this sets a precedent for developing the land subject of the current application relating to land rear of 1 Grove Road.

In the case of the permitted sites the development agreed provided for an overall enhancement of the area. In the case of the land rear of South Street, it created an active frontage to Twittens Way enhancing the local townscape. In the case of the land r/o 3 Grove Road, the proposal was an innovative design solution tailored to the site constraints. I acknowledged in my appraisal of that scheme that the provision of this new house plot would be contrary to the established grain and character of the conservation area in the sense that it eats into a portion of the rear garden. However, the quality of the design was such that overall it would have a positive design impact. It provides an attractive visual end stop to views from South Street where the townscape is currently weak. Furthermore it provides for the rebuilding of the more recent poor quality flint garden wall element in a more suitable brick. The house plot benefits from being part of a deeper garden and wider plot. While I acknowledge there is some infringement of the established building grain, both permitted schemes result in overall enhancement.

The current scheme replaces a modest single storey structure with a full two storey residential unit. Although the overall ridge height is lower than the unit permitted to the rear of 3 Grove Road, due to its orientation and design the perception of bulk and scale will be considerably more imposing and overpowering. It sits immediately adjacent to the adjacent public footpath (Twitten) occupying virtually the whole width of the plot (barely 0.5m to each boundary – which would make construction and future maintenance extremely challenging. The proposal is for a relatively standard house type with a long plain brick rather bland flank frontage to the public footpath,.

The net result is a more visually dominant building on a cramped plot which sits uncomfortably within its broader surroundings. The design is a poor compromise, restricted by site limitations, and is much weaker as a result. On balance I consider the proposals will be detrimental to the character and appearance of the conservation area. It therefore does not provide the clear benefit and visual enhancement secured by the permitted schemes, and lacks a compelling argument for departing from the established street pattern.

Aside from other policy considerations, I could not preclude the possibility of some form of redevelopment of this site. I could foresee the possibility of a much more modest structure designed to read more as a service building to the main house. It would need to be much less ambitious in terms of accommodation probably providing little more than studio/granny annexe accommodation.

If the current application falls to be determined I would have to recommend refusal, based the scale, form and cramped nature of the development which

is out of character with the (conservation) area. I would see this supplementing general design policy objections..

John Townsend
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