



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 February 2026

by **P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th April 2026

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/25/3376667

Tree Tops Mapledrakes Road, Ewhurst, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 7QW

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Crownhall Estates against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2024/01134.
 - The development proposed is described as outline application for up to 14 dwellings, including access, following demolition of an existing dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The original application was made in outline with all matters reserved apart from access. I assessed the appeal on that basis. I have had regard to the submitted drawings, but have considered all elements shown as indicative, apart from the proposed access.
3. A signed and dated Unilateral Undertaking (UU) under s106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 was submitted with the appeal. Amongst other things it seeks to secure contributions to affordable housing and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) monitoring. I turn to the UU and the obligations it contains later in this decision.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site is a generous plot with an L-shape which accommodates a detached bungalow. The land, which is largely set behind the rear gardens of the dwellings along Mapledrakes Road, slopes down towards the Ancient Woodland to the rear.
6. The site is located within the eastern side of Mapledrakes Road which, in this location, is generally characterised by linear development. Typically, development is tightly spaced, and the dwellings face the road with frontages that accommodate parking and generous planting. The western side of Mapledrakes Road has a different character to the eastern side, whereby it includes roads that run perpendicular to Mapledrakes Road, including The Glebe and Mapledrakes Close.

7. The appeal scheme would result in the construction of up to 14 dwellings within the site. Matters relating to the layout of the proposal are not before me for consideration at this stage. Nonetheless, even if a parameters plan was to be secured by condition were I minded to allow the appeal, the proposed dwellings would extend across the depth of the site and would be placed to the rear of the existing dwellings along Mapledrakes Road. The increase in the amount of built development in this location, and its arrangement likely with a central spine road, would be at odds with the established linear pattern of development. Consequently, the proposal would fail to successfully integrate with the surrounding urban fabric and would harm the character of the locality.
8. The existing bungalow would be demolished to accommodate the access point into the site which the appellant's Landscape Hearing Statement (LHS) sets out would be noticeable from localised viewpoints. The access would create a sizeable gap between the existing dwellings, at odds with the pattern of closely spaced properties. Although views towards the dwellings from Mapledrakes Road would likely be limited, and the indicative Landscape Masterplan shows that the access would be constructed in appropriate materials and bound by a landscape buffer on either side, its creation would be conspicuous in local views and would provide a clear indication of development to the rear, at odds with the street scene.
9. The LHS found that the appeal scheme would result in an overall negligible effect upon landscape character. Moreover, the proposed density would likely be appropriate for the locality. However, this would not address the visual harm to the street scene as I have identified above.
10. I have been provided with details of residential developments elsewhere in Ewhurst. However, the developments on Land South of Chanrossa¹ and Firethorn Farm and 44 and 45 Larkfield² are situated in an area where there are other cul-de-sacs which are accessed from The Green. Similarly, there are other forms of back-land development near the consented scheme at Backward Point³. The pattern of development in these other locations is therefore not the same as that in the vicinity of the site and so these cases would not justify the proposal before me.
11. Thus, the proposal would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area, in conflict with Policy TD1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites 2018 (LPP1), Policy DM4 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2023 (LPP2), and Policies EEG3 and EEG4 of the Ewhurst and Ellens Green Neighbourhood Plan 2019-2032 (2022) (NP). Amongst other things, these policies require new development to respond effectively to its surroundings, reinforcing local distinctiveness.

Other Matters

12. My attention is drawn to a previously dismissed appeal decision pertaining to the construction of up to 20 dwellings within the appeal site⁴. While it may be that the scheme before me proposes fewer dwellings, for the reasons set out above I find it would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area in its own right.

¹ LPA Ref: WA/2017/0772

² Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/18/3203951

³ Appeal A: APP/R3650/W/16/3150906 and Appeal B: APP/R3650/W/16/3150910

⁴ Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/22/3302544

13. It appears from the evidence that the context of the site at Land at Woodend on Bookhurst Road⁵ is different, since it adjoins an area of woodland to one of its side boundaries, which is not the case with the appeal site which adjoins residential development to both sides. Consequently, I cannot conclude that this example represents a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. Therefore, as I am required to do, I have determined the case before me on the site-specific circumstances and on its own merits.
14. The Council has reviewed the legal agreement, and it indicates that the UU does not include the bed size, tenure and type / rent levels of affordable homes. In addition, the timings for transferring the affordable units to an Affordable Housing Provider depart from the Council's standards, and the UU contains tenures that are not permitted by the Council. Therefore, it appears that the proposed affordable housing would not meet the Council's requirements. Moreover, the Council has an issue with the appellant's approach towards the BNG monitoring obligations. However, whilst I have accepted the UU as a part of the appeal submission, its absence was not a reason for refusal. As such, this matter is not determinative in terms of coming to my decision.

Planning Balance

15. The main parties acknowledge that there is not a demonstrable five-year supply of deliverable housing sites, and both indicated the supply to be 1.28 years. In such circumstances, paragraph 11 d) ii of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) states that permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
16. The provision of suitable renewable energy technology, sustainable drainage scheme and reduction of the local risk of flooding are largely policy requirements. While the proposed housing mix would not fully accord with the need for different size homes in the Borough, it could be addressed at reserved matters stage. Therefore, these are neutral factors that neither weigh for or against the development.
17. In terms of benefits, the proposal would meet the Framework's objective of boosting the supply of housing and would deliver a net gain of up to 13 dwellings close to public transport links and to local services and facilities. The appellant has referred me to several appeal decisions, which indicate that there is a chronic shortfall when compared to the five-year supply threshold set out in the Framework. On this basis, the provision of housing attracts considerable weight in favour of the appeal scheme.
18. The appellant is committed to providing a Local Area for Play and a Local Equipped Area for Play, which would benefit future residents and those already living in the locality. The evidence indicates that only one would need to be provided. As such, this carries moderate weight in favour of the scheme.

⁵ LPA Ref: WA/2025/00256

19. Some economic benefits would be accrued during the period of construction and once the dwellings would be occupied. However, given the scale of the proposed development, these benefits carry modest weight in support of the scheme.
20. Set against the benefits of the proposal, the proposed development would result in harm to the character and appearance of the area for the reasons outlined above. This would conflict with the provisions of the Framework, which seek to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment. This attracts significant weight against the proposal.
21. The delivery of up to four affordable houses has not been adequately secured by legal agreement. The Framework supports the provision of affordable homes. This therefore carries moderate weight against the scheme.
22. Without a planning obligation, I cannot be certain that the BNG monitoring obligations could be secured for the relevant period. The Framework seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment, and this carries minor weight against the scheme.
23. Accordingly, having carefully considered the balance of factors, the adverse impacts of the proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. As a result, the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply.

Conclusion

24. The proposal conflicts with the development plan as a whole and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeal should be decided other than in accordance with it. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR