

Planning Appeal against the refusal of DC/15/1627 46 Comptons Lane, Horsham

Appeal reference APP/Z3825/W/15/3140956

1. Horsham Society's objection is that

1.1. "the revised plans showing a slightly wider gap between the proposed houses simply serves to further highlight that the applicant is trying to shoehorn five houses into a plot that is suitable for a maximum of four. We have no objection in principle to infill development on this site but it needs to respect the character of the current street scene. Although existing properties are varied in character and style they are all well spaced giving an overall uncrowded appearance to the street scene. This can only be satisfactorily mirrored on this site by a reduction to four houses. We are also concerned about the colour of the proposed brickwork. Red brick/local stock brick should be used instead."

2. Neighbourhood Consultation and Planning Officers' Advice

2.1. The appeal statement makes considerable reference throughout (1 and 4.1 – 4.9) to previous schemes and correspondence. I note the email from Horsham District Council 28 September 2015, which recorded that the density was too high and suggested that the number of dwelling be reduced to three, respecting building lines. The applicant ignored this advice and let the scheme go forward for consideration and subsequent rejection.

2.2. The applicant's "shock" reported in 4.4 seems to be in complete contrast to the number of local resident's objections, suggesting that the applicant's Community Consultations claimed in 4.2- 4.3 did not listen to the residents' responses, nor to those of the Council Officers.

3. Site Density

3.1. The character paragraph 6.10 records that the immediate area consists predominately of `Modern Post World War 1945-1970` and `Modern 1970-1985` (Horsham Town Design Statement SPD 2008), dwellings, i.e. that there are no post 1985 developments to be considered.

3.2. The densities of the proposal are too high. The applicant makes comparison (6.20) with five "local" sites plus the applicant's site. Four of those five are of lesser density, these being those adjacent or closest to the site. These all fit into the Modern Post World War 1945-1970` and `Modern 1970-1985 categories identified. The fifth, the only one higher, is post 1985, does not match the character of this area and is 3.5km distant from the site. Indeed The Firs, Farthings Hill is the opposite side of Horsham, as far away as possible within the town. Within 3.5km of the applicant's site there are dozens of sites of varying density, both higher and lower so this fifth site is arbitrarily chosen to try, unsuccessfully, to justify the higher density, based on information from a distant part of Horsham. The Firs site is considerably larger, over five times the size so not a good comparator. Overall the comparison with The Firs, Farthings Hill is spurious.

3.3. The appeal 6.14 – 6.35, centres on the density issue. Paragraph 6.21 is not true.

3.4. The appeal statement helpfully demonstrates that this high density argument is based on a single distant development from a different post 1985 era, recording adjacent and local sites densities and character, then ignoring the information and figures.

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4. Building Line

- 4.1. Please also refer also to the Contextual Building Line drawing. This drawing clearly shows that the new properties, particularly Plot 5 is greatly forward of the notional building line from the north of the site along Comptons Lane (nos. 131, 133 135). It is also forward of the building line from the west along Comptons Lane (nos. 32, 36, 40). The dotted line shows that for the applicant has conveniently ignored no. 44 Comptons Lane which is the property immediately to the West of the site, in order to engineer the extra dwelling on plot 5. The line from the south follows the general line, pushed forward at the north of the applicant's site, yet does not join with the properties to the north of the site. The notional building line is left hanging in the air over the roundabout. The drawing demonstrates that the proposal does not comply with any building line.
- 4.2. Consider the existing building, conveniently not shown on the Contextual Building Lines, which exists to the rear of the plots 4 and 5. This property fully respects both the line to the West and from the North of the site.
- 4.3. Overall the front gardens are too small; they do not reflect the open plan nature of the front garden opposite and to the south, i.e. the local character. This is a direct result of too high density on the site.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Horsham Society submits that the appeal should be dismissed, on grounds of density and disregard of the building line.
- 5.2. The Society is also concerned over the brick colour choice.

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Horsham Society