

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 October 2016

by Richard S Jones BA (Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 24th October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/16/3155344

91 Stoughton Road, Guildford, GU1 1LH

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a failure to give notice within the prescribed period of a decision on an application for planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mrs Julie White against Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/01099, is dated 30 May 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single storey rear extension, two storey side extension with internal reorganisation with loft conversion to form new ground floor annex and living accommodation.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. Although the street scene includes a range of house types including detached, semi-detached and terrace housing of varying design, they are predominantly two storey and of modest scale. The detached appeal dwelling is reflective of this scale and sits comfortably within its context.
 4. The proposed extensions and alterations would fundamentally change the scale and design of the dwelling such that it would bear little resemblance to that of the existing. The two storey side extension would continue along the front building line and would substantially increase the width of the dwelling from approximately 7.7m to just over 12m. The extension would also substantially increase the depth of the dwelling along its south eastern elevation to approximately 13.5m. In combination with the rear extension the proposal would more than double the existing ground and first floor area to approximately 260m². The loft floor area would add a further 55m² thereby increasing the floorspace of the dwelling by appeal 194m².
 5. I appreciate that the appeal site benefits from a relatively large plot and that efforts have been made to overcome the reasons for refusing a previous application. Nevertheless, the scheme currently before, which would be prominent in approaching views from the north east due to the existing gap between the appeal dwelling and No 85 Stoughton Road, amounts to a disproportionately large addition that would be out of keeping with the scale and
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- design of the existing dwelling and the street scene. I do not consider that the harm arising would be materially alleviated by the reduction in the ridge height along the side or by using the same window design to the front elevation.
6. I am also unconvinced that the use of contrasting materials for the central section of the dwelling would give the appearance of three terrace houses. In my view, rather than aid assimilation or balance, the design feature would draw further attention to the substantial scale of the dwelling.
 7. Although the combined width of Nos 24 and 26 Stoughton Lane might be greater, that is created by two semi-detached dwellings and as such does not justify the increases sought at the appeal dwelling. Whilst this similarly applies to the development to which I have been referred in Larch Avenue, I do acknowledge that that example is particularly substantial. However, the appeal proposal would not be viewed in that context.
 8. In views from the rear along the footpath on the opposite side of the river, the existing dwelling is framed by the existing trees such that the flanking properties are not readily visible. As the initial context is somewhat lost, the substantial increase in size and fundamental change to the dwelling would in my view be less harmful and taken in isolation would not be unacceptable.
 9. Nevertheless, when viewed within Stoughton Road I find that the proposal would result in material harm to the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and street scene, contrary to Saved Policies G5 and G8 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 and Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Extensions 2003. These state, amongst other matters, that planning permission to extend dwellings will be granted provided that the development has no adverse effect on the scale and character of the dwelling and no unacceptable effect on the existing context and character of the adjacent buildings and immediate surroundings. The proposal would also conflict with paragraph 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which states that permission should be refused for development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area.

Other matters

10. I acknowledge the concerns expressed by the appellant that, having regard to paragraphs 186 and 187 of the Framework, the Council was neither positive nor proactive at pre-application and application stage. However, these are not matters for this appeal, which I have determined afresh and on its planning merits and having regard to all matters raised.
11. I note that the council has found that the proposal would not result in material harm to the living conditions of neighbouring dwellings and that adequate parking would be provided. Although I find no reason to take a contrary position, this lack of harm cannot weigh in favour of the proposal and should properly be considered as neutral in the planning balance.
12. I sympathise with the appellant's desire to provide living accommodation for a relative and acknowledge that this could result in that person's existing dwelling becoming available. I also appreciate that the existing dwelling may be in need of modernisation and improved insulation. However, these matters do not outweigh the harm I have explained above.

13. For these reasons, and taking all other matters into consideration, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Richard S Jones

Inspector