

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2016

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 22 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/16/3159831

Firle, The Way, Reigate, Surrey RH2 0LD

- 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 Peter Wijnen against the decision of Reigate & Banstead District Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00988/HHOLD, dated 15 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single / two storey rear extension.
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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 host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property is a sizeable aesthetically appealing detached Edwardian dwelling with a generous garden. The wider established residential area is characterised by large detached dwellings set within deep spacious plots. A variety of architectural styles is found locally, albeit the majority of dwellings are of traditional Surrey vernacular, and these generally attractive homes, along with the widespread soft landscape, come together to form an area of extremely pleasing appearance. The proposal is as described above and would primarily provide for some additional accommodation over three floors.
 4. The site lies within the Wray Common Conservation Area. There is a duty imposed by Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requiring decision makers to have special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area (CA). Policy Pc13 of the Borough Local Plan 2005 (LP) broadly reflects this and adds more detailed criteria designed to ensure the safeguarding of these heritage assets.
 5. The existing side elevation is set forward of the neighbouring property and is on clear view looking south down The Way. Even with its positioning on the common side boundary it is an attractive proposition with interest, suitable scale and a subtle approach reflective of the Surrey vernacular. The proposal
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to add a two storey rear extension to this flank, adding mass to the side wall, and creating a full rear facing gable up to main roof height, would be unduly detrimental to the current structure and a sense of restraint would be lost. It would lack suitable subordination to the host property. The massing would be closer to the neighbouring property and instead of the spacious attributes one generally sees locally there would be a move towards a more terraced effect. The scale and design of the single storey extension with its siting on the boundary, upstanding pitched edges to a flat roof and a very large glazed roof light would add to the overall sense of unbalanced, incongruous, extension works for a fine home within a Conservation Area. The continuation of the siting of development immediately along the boundary contributes further to the harm which would be caused by the works. The existing hedgerow and planting opportunities, landscape attributes generally, and sense of space found locally would be eroded.

6. Policies Ho9, Ho13 and Ho16 of the Borough local Plan 2005 (LP), taken together and amongst other matters, call for a suitably scaled high quality design of development sympathetic to a site's wider setting and ensuring protection of local distinctiveness and character generally along with the aesthetics of the host property. I conclude that the proposal would conflict with these policies as well as LP Policy Pc13 and the aims of S72(1) of the Act because there would not be preservation or enhancement of character or appearance of the Conservation Area.

Other matters

7. I understand the wish of the Appellant to increase internal space. I note that there were no objections from Local Councillors, The Reigate Society, tree officer or any other statutory consultees. The scheme would not be unduly harmful to residential amenity. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
8. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) have been considered. Key objectives of the Framework are to protect and enhance the qualities of the natural and built environment as well as to safeguard heritage assets; development plan policies which I cite mirror these. The Framework underlines that great weight should be given to a heritage asset's conservation. The appeal proposal would lead to less than substantial harm to the significance of the designated heritage asset however what public benefits there would be, such as construction employment, would not outweigh this harm. Furthermore there are no other benefits, including to the Appellant, which to my mind would be of a scale to outweigh the harm to the Conservation Area which I have identified.

Overall conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR