

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 December 2016

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 4 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3630/D/16/3160512

32 Glebe Road, Egham, TW20 8BT

- 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 J Lane against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RU.16/1103, dated 1 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is a single storey side and 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 living conditions for neighbours.

Reasons

Living conditions

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached two storey dwelling in an established residential row of similar properties. It has a part-width two storey outrigger to the rear and a good sized north east facing back garden. The dwelling is separated from its side boundary by a gap of a little under 1 metre and the parallel property (No 34) mirrors this, the main side entrance arrangement and the outrigger. Beyond the entrance paths the gardens are separated by a fence of about 1.8m. The outrigger arrangement means that the neighbouring ground floor rear facing window is set 'deep' within the built form. The outrigger has two windows (including at least one secondary one) and a glazed door. The proposal is as described above, would take the form of a flat roofed structure with a rooflight, and would 'wrap around' the existing two storey outrigger providing additional living and kitchen space.
 4. The Council is concerned that the proposed single storey rear extension by reason of its depth and proximity to the side boundary with No 34, would have an overbearing visual impact on the neighbour's nearest rear window, which would be unneighbourly and harmful to the residential amenities. Amongst other matters the Appellant draws attention to the gap being maintained by the scheme, the flat roofed nature of the development and the fact that screen fencing is in place.
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5. As I indicate above the outlook from the rear ground floor of the neighbouring property is far from extensive but nevertheless provides about the norm in terms of the somewhat limited light and blinkered vista for very many closely knit semi-detached homes. The appeal proposal would markedly intrude upon the outlook which is presently available. The planned extension would simply be too high and too lengthy given this proximity to the fenestration serving No 34. I do not agree with the Appellant that a set-in of under a metre from a 1.8m fence for a 2.8m structure over 9m long would be sufficient in this instance and in my opinion the fence would not adequately mitigate the impact. The structure would be overbearing and unsettling by its visual imposition. I did notice that floor levels were higher in the appeal property than at No 34 and following this through would not help the relationship. In the round the scheme is somewhat over ambitious and regrettably the overall impact of the development would be one of undue impingement upon living conditions.
6. Saved Policy HO9 of the Runnymede Borough Local Plan Second Alteration April 2001 calls for, amongst other matters, sensitively designed development which would not have any undue adverse impact on residential amenity. I conclude that this scheme would conflict with this policy.
7. The parties cite the Adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance 'Householder Guide' July 2003 (SPG) which while sharing similar objectives to Saved Policy HO9 goes further in advising that, as a *guide*, ground floor extensions are acceptable where they do not extend more than 3 metres from the rear of the property, or break a 60 degree line from the centre point of the neighbour's nearest window. I would share the Appellant's stance on this level of almost blanket control – if taken to the letter it is overly prescriptive, certainly in this instance, given that the document cannot be expected to cover every eventuality and in any event is arguably now in part showing its age given more recent legislative changes such as that pertaining to 'permitted development'. I therefore give the SPG, on this occasion and in this detailed regard only, little weight. Nevertheless its principles of seeking to secure well designed and neighbourly development continue to be sound and on this front I conclude there would be conflict with the *objectives* of this document.

Other matters

8. I sympathise with the Appellant's wish to increase and improve the accommodation of this property on this relatively generous plot. The Appellant refers to the extension to the adjoining property (No 30) and seeks even-handedness. I do not know the planning background to the works on that home but the built form and arrangement and relationship to neighbours with a side driveway is different. In any event I must determine the scheme before me on its own merits. I do however agree that there would be no amenity impact on residents of No 30. I appreciate that residents of No 34 have not objected but I have to consider the amenity value provided by the property for the long term and future residents. The current occupiers of No 34 may indeed wish to extend their home in a parallel fashion but I have no sight of a concurrent planning application in this regard and have no detail or firm proposal to take into account. 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.

9. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered; the Council's policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within that document.

Overall conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on living conditions for neighbours. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR