

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by J C Clarke BSc(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 6 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/16/3156387

70 Guildford Park Avenue, Guildford, GU2 7NL

- 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 Martin Parr against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/00804, dated 20 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is Side extension to existing house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect that the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') stresses the need for new development to be well designed and to contribute positively to making places better.
 4. The appeal property is situated in an established residential area, in which many of the dwellings are arranged in short terraces of 2 and 3 storeys in height, with frontages or gables facing the highway. Whilst the area is fairly densely developed, spaces which exist between many of the dwellings and adjacent highways give it a reasonably spacious character.
 5. Number 70 itself forms one end of a short terrace of four 3-storey houses which is of a similar form, scale and alignment to nearby terraces at 48-54 (evens) and 56-62 (evens) Guildford Park Avenue. The property has a large and imposing end gable which faces towards Guildford Park Avenue, from which it is separated by a side space. This end gable is in line with those of numbers 54 and 56, and the three end gables between them form a clearly defined building line facing towards the highway.
 6. The proposed 3 storey side extension would have a similar style to, and have front and rear walls and roof which would align with those of, the existing appeal dwelling. However, it would fill almost the entire width of the side space between the appeal dwelling and Guildford Park Avenue. Its gable would present a high and dominant area of brickwork immediately next to the
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highway which would project substantially in front of the building line which is currently formed by the end gables of numbers 54, 56 and 70.

7. New end terraced houses have been created at numbers 27A and 41A Guildford Park Avenue, the gables of which face towards the highway. However, these and the terraces of which they form part are only 2 storeys in height. Furthermore, due to their design and positioning in relation to the alignment of the road and of adjacent buildings, these new houses are less obtrusive in the street scene than would be the case with the appeal proposal. Other extensions which have been drawn to my attention in the area do not replicate the scale, design or site characteristics of the development now proposed.
8. Following construction of the proposed extension, the overall length of the terrace would still be less than that at 36-46 (evens) Guildford Park Avenue, which also has only small side spaces at either end. However, the end gable of number 36, unlike that at the appeal property, is set at an oblique angle in relation to the nearby part of the Avenue and faces towards an adjacent terrace. It is also some distance away from the highway.
9. Due to a combination of its scale, position, and design, the proposed extension would cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. It would therefore conflict with relevant provisions in Saved Policies G5(1) and H8 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (GBLP) 2003, the Framework and the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Extensions (SPG) 2003.
10. I acknowledge that the advice of the SPG relating to the 'setting in' of 2 storey side extensions from the original main front wall and the setting down of the roof from the original roof line appears to relate primarily to properties of a different design to the appeal dwelling. I also acknowledge that Policy H8 contains no such advice and that such an approach may not always be suitable for extensions to terraced blocks. However, these points do not outweigh the harm which I have identified in relation to the submitted proposal.

Other Considerations

11. I acknowledge that the proposed extension could provide student accommodation in an area which is in need of this, and that this would also help the nearby University to contribute to the economy of the area. As the site is within easy walking distance of the University, jobs, services and public transport facilities in the surrounding area, it would do so in a way which would be carbon efficient. It would also not cause traffic congestion. However, the Framework does not suggest that objectives related to these matters over-ride those relating to design and the quality of the built environment.

Conclusion

12. I have found that the appeal proposal would cause substantial harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area. Whilst it would bring a range of benefits these would not outweigh the harm that I have identified. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Jonathan Clarke

INSPECTOR