

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2017

by Paul Jackson B Arch (Hons) RIBA

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

Decision date: 16 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/16/3162829

14 Leonardslee Court, Furnace Green, Crawley RH10 6PW

- 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 David Lauderdale against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref CR/2016/0590/FUL, dated 28 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 18 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is front extension to infill existing courtyard area.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a front extension to infill existing courtyard area at 14 Leonardslee Court, Furnace Green, Crawley RH10 6PW in accordance with the terms of the application, CR/2016/0590/FUL, dated 28 June 2016, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with drawing 734/16/03/A.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the extension hereby approved, including bricks, brickwork bond and pointing, shall match those existing.
 - 4) No development shall commence until details of the masonry junctions with the existing building, the parapet, roof and window sills, jambs, heads and glazing at a scale of not less than 1:20 have been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.

Reasons

2. The main issue is whether the character or appearance of the Forestfield and Shrublands Conservation Area would be preserved or enhanced. Leonardslee Court consists of a row of identical dwellings accessed from a pedestrian way. Central front porches project from the 2 storey dwellings creating small external courtyards on either side. The smaller courtyards on the right hand side are private and benefit from high walls and fencing. The overall architectural effect is to create a sense of rhythm in the public realm which is a defining feature of the Forestfields Estate.
-

3. The Conservation Area Statement for the Forestfield and Shrublands Conservation Area of 1998 advises that the purpose of designation is to preserve and enhance the distinctive character of the estates and maintain the quality of the buildings and common areas to the original design as award winning developments. The document advises that the Council is not seeking to prevent all new extensions but that their design should retain the character and appearance of the area generally. I saw at the site visit that a significant number of houses on the estate have been extended into the private courtyard areas, with varying standards of window detailing and brickwork.
4. No 14 lies at the end of a row of 8 similar dwellings adjacent to a junction in the pedestrianized access paths. The form and rhythm of the original 'street scene' as conceived by the architects would remain largely undisturbed by this proposal. The rhythm is defined by gaps between protruding elements and this proposal would not prevent the original concept being easily understood. Providing that the materials are identical and detailing sensitively carried out, the impact on the architectural character of the terrace as a whole would be extremely modest. Moreover, it is clear from some of the work carried out elsewhere on the estate that where the correct matching detailing and materials have been used with sympathetic windows and glazing, small extensions can successfully blend in without compromising architectural character. The sense of spaciousness that currently exists on the corner would not be significantly affected because there is already a high wall and fence.
5. I conclude that the character and appearance of the conservation area would be preserved by the proposed development. It would not conflict with the heritage protection or design quality aims of policies CH2, CH3 and CH13 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 or with the relevant objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework.
6. Conditions are imposed to ensure that the materials used (particularly brickwork) match those existing and to require details of important junctions and window components. The development must be constructed in accordance with the approved drawing in the interests of good planning and for the avoidance of doubt.
7. For all the above reasons, the appeal is allowed.

Paul Jackson

INSPECTOR