
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 February 2017

by R J Marshall LLB DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 20 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/16/3166002

5, Ailsa Close, Broadfield, Crawley, RH11 9DW

- 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 Roland Hivart against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref CR/2016/0878/FUL, dated 12 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is in a relatively high density 1970s housing estate. Houses on the estate in the vicinity of the site are generally of a quite novel design with mono-pitch roofs and with a frequent set-backs of houses one to the other. I found, as did an Inspector in a previous appeal decision on the site, APP/Q3820/D/16/3151165, that the well-articulated shapes and placement of buildings in the area results in a varied and lively layout and design.
4. The proposal is for a two-storey extension to the rear of the appellants' house. It would be the full width of the house and have a normal dual pitch roof with a ridge line extending down towards the garden. Such a roof form would be seriously out of keeping with the mono-pitch design of the existing house and the similar mono-pitch design of most other houses in the vicinity. As such it would appear intrusive and out of keeping in relation to the character and appearance of the existing house and the surrounding area.
5. In arriving at the above view I have had regard to the extent to which the proposed extension would be visible. It would be seen from some neighbouring rear gardens, in oblique views from Ailsa Close, from the nearby Horsham Road and from the top and bottom of the landscape bund between this road and the estate. Thus the harm identified would be readily apparent.

6. I appreciate that in submitting the current proposal the appellant is seeking to overcome harm found with regard to the flat roof 2 story extension dismissed in the appeal decision referred to above. However, I find the conflict between the existing mono-pitched design of the appeal property and the two pitch design of the proposal to be as harmful as the flat roof extension would have been. Added harm would arise from the fact that by extending out into the rear garden to the length of the adjoining house the current step back between the two properties would be lost and with it part of the varied and lively layout and design of the area.
7. A dual pitch rear extension has been added to the rear of No. 50 Colonsay Road in the vicinity of the site. However, this was permitted some considerable time ago under a different local and national policy regime. Moreover, from what I saw, although out of keeping it is at least of a lesser scale. It does not justify the harm of the proposal before me. Nor does the fact that there may be practical problems with alternative means of construction.
8. It may be that as permitted development certain changes could be made to the appeal property without the requirement for planning permission. However, no specific fall-back position is referred to and the existence, per-se, of such rights does not support the proposal before me.
9. It is concluded that the proposed development would detract from the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such it would conflict with Policies CH2 and CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan (2015-2030) which seek to ensure that new development responds to and reinforces local distinctiveness and has regard to the site and its wider context.

Other matters

10. The rear elevation of the proposed development would bring habitable room windows closer to the windows of a house to the rear to an extent that would conflict with the Council's *Urban Design Supplementary Planning Document 2016 (SPD)*. However, the difference is not that great and with existing boundary screening no unacceptable harm would arise. The retained garden length would not be quite as great as sought in the SPD. However, given the width of the garden and the angle of the back fence this would not be unduly harmful. However, lack of harm in these respects does not make the proposal acceptable given the harm found on the main issue.
11. The appellant has sought guidance on a revised proposal with a mono-pitched roof were I minded to dismiss this appeal. However, my observations must be limited to the proposal before me.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above it is concluded that the appeal should be dismissed.

R J Marshall

INSPECTOR

