
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 April 2017

by Kevin Gleeson BA MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 16 May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/16/3165628

63 Cranley Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 2JW

- 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 I Fraser against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/01127, dated 19 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 5 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of 63 Cranley Road and erection of 1 No. four bedroom detached house and 2 No. semi-detached four bedroom houses and associated parking and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - whether the proposed development would cause harm to protected species and their habitat; and
 - whether the proposed development provides appropriate mitigation measures in respect of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal site comprises a two storey detached dwelling set within a generous plot. Cranley Road contains a range of predominantly large detached two and three storey Victorian and Edwardian properties but also more modern houses and blocks of flats. The surrounding area has a range of architectural styles with buildings sitting in a variety of plot sizes.
 4. To the north of the appeal site is a three storey flatted development whilst to the south is the development of Coplestone Chase comprising three pairs of two storey semi-detached dwellings which also have accommodation within the roofspace. Neighbouring developments to the north and south demonstrate a strong building line and are of a greater height and scale than the existing property on the appeal site.
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5. The proposal is to construct a detached four bedroom dwelling adjacent to 61 Cranley Road (plot 1) and two-semi-detached four bedroom dwellings to the south (plots 2 and 3), following demolition of the existing house. Each property would be two storeys with further accommodation within the roof space. Two parking spaces would be provided to the front of each property. The height, building line and parking arrangements of the proposed development would be reflective of the Coplestone Chase development.
6. The development of Coplestone Chase has a rhythm to it which informs the character of the area and this would be replicated by the proposed development of the pair of semi-detached properties on the appeal site. Furthermore, the gap between the proposed semi-detached houses and the northernmost property of Coplestone Chase would be similar to that between the pairs of properties comprising Coplestone Chase. Gaps between plots 1 and 2 would also be similar to those between the Coplestone Chase properties.
7. The rhythm established by Coplestone Chase would not extend to the development of the detached house on plot 1. However, as the area is characterised by variety in plot and building widths, deliberately breaking the rhythm would not be unacceptable. Nevertheless, set on a narrow plot, the detached house would appear tall and narrow whilst the depth and roof form would appear out of proportion with neighbouring properties. Consequently, the width of the proposed detached house, together with its scale and proportions would result in a cramped appearance at variance with the character of the immediate area. Moreover, it does not, in my view provide an appropriate transition to the neighbouring Onslow Court development.
8. Furthermore the proposed flat roof front dormer on the detached house would be large and would dominate the roof plane. Where other front elevation dormers are found locally they have smaller roof plane coverage and generally have pitched roofs. Consequently this feature would be uncharacteristic of the area. The side hipped dormer on the detached house would also appear dominant when viewed from the front.
9. Opening up the frontage of the appeal site to provide car parking would result in the removal of the existing landscaping. This would make the proposed buildings more prominent particularly as only limited replacement landscaping is proposed, although the appellant suggests that there would be space for further soft landscaping. When considered alongside the extensive parking to the front of Coplestone Chase, the additional car parking would be detrimental to the character of the wider area.
10. I therefore find that the proposals would be out of character with the streetscene and would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area. They would be contrary to Policies G5 and H4 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan, 2003 (the Local Plan) which require buildings to be of a scale and character which reflects the surrounding area. As these policies are generally consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) I attach significant weight to them taking account of the advice in paragraph 215.
11. The proposals would also be contrary to the Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance in respect of a requirement for new development to address the scale and proportions of surrounding buildings and for dormers not to be over-dominant in the roof plane. They would also fail to

address the requirements of section 7 of the Framework in respect of good design.

Protected Species

12. An ecological appraisal submitted as part of the application indicated evidence of bats on the site and recommended that further survey work should be carried out to establish whether the species would be affected by the demolition of the existing building. It also suggested a range of mitigation measures to be considered once the outcome of the further surveys is known.
13. The appellant has stated that the additional survey work could be the subject of a planning condition. However, I do not consider that it would be reasonable to address this matter through a condition as Circular 6/2005 indicates that surveys should be carried out before planning permission is granted where there is a reasonable likelihood of a protected species being present and affected.
14. Consequently, it has not been demonstrated that there would be no harm to protected species contrary to the requirements of Policy NE4 of the Local Plan which seeks to prevent harm to protected species and section 11 of the Framework which seeks to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Mitigation

15. A signed and dated Unilateral Undertaking under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has been submitted by the appellant. This would secure the delivery of the necessary measures to mitigate any impact of the proposed development upon the Thames Basin Heath SPA through contributions towards the cost of upgrading and maintaining Suitable Accessible Natural Green Space and an Access Management and Monitoring Contribution. I am satisfied that these contributions comply with the requirements of Policies NE1 and NE4 of the Local Plan and Saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan which seek to prevent harm to protected species and habitats. It would also accord with the Habitats Regulations and Directive which seeks to ensure that development does not adversely affect European sites and species. The contributions are consistent with Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations, 2010.

Other Matters

16. The Council accepts that it does not have a five year supply of deliverable housing sites. Taking into account the Framework's aim to boost significantly the supply of housing, the provision of three dwellings would represent a modest increase to the stock of housing. This carries moderate weight in favour of the proposal.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

17. I have concluded that the proposal would be contrary to Policies G5 and H4 of the Local Plan and that it would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the local area. It would also be contrary to Policy NE4 in respect of protected species. Balanced against this is the contribution to the supply of housing, to which I have given moderate weight.

18. Taking everything into account, I consider that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. As a result, the application of paragraph 14 of the Framework does not indicate that permission should be granted and the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply. In the circumstance of this appeal other considerations do not justify making a decision other than in accordance with the development plan.

19. For these reasons, the appeal should be dismissed.

Kevin Gleeson

INSPECTOR