
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 29 March 2017

by David Walker MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 19th May 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5630/W/16/3165143

Villiers Lodge, 1 Crane Park, Surbiton KT5 8AB

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant outline planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr and Mrs M Malakouti against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 16/16578/OUT, dated 11 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 7 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is erection of three flats in a three storey block with associated car parking.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The application was made in outline with appearance and landscaping reserved for future consideration. I have dealt the appeal on that basis treating the details submitted in relation to access, layout and scale for determination at this time.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in the appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site is created from part of the existing garden to Villiers Lodge, a former single dwelling long since converted to a hotel. It occupies a prominent position near to the junction of Cranes Park with Lamberts Road and where it is clearly seen in wider street scene views of the locale. There is a suburban residential character in the area derived from sizeable Victorian and Edwardian houses arranged in a regular pattern with landscaped frontages. While individual house designs differ, there is a consistency in the ridged roofs forms, some hipped, and in the high quality of architectural detailing.
 5. Given the limitations imposed by the triangular plot a staggered footprint for the proposed flats has been employed. This has the effect of placing the building much closer to the highway than the other properties of the street. The proposal would also be positioned at a greater distance away from Villiers Lodge than the typically narrow separation distances between other dwellings of the street.
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6. Such a plot arrangement would jar with the consistent frontage depths and the generally small gaps between neighbouring dwellings at this part of Cranes Park. Additionally, the floor levels would be much lower than Villiers Lodge although the respective building heights would be similar. Windows would therefore inevitably be positioned at a lower level than those of the neighbouring building further highlighting the differences between the plots.
7. With the layout and scale of the development not reserved for future consideration the proposal would establish design parameters that would be fixed. Therefore, while the detail of matters such as the location of cycle and bin storage could be conditioned, there would be no flexibility over the position and size of the development to achieve a more satisfactory arrangement.
8. While I am satisfied that the private garden areas would not contribute towards a cramped appearance there would be little room for planting at the front of the development to provide any meaningful screening. The proposal would therefore remain prominent in street scene views where its departure from the strong rhythm and character of development along Cranes Park would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area.
9. I acknowledge that town centre facilities and public transport services would be within reasonable travel distances, and that a satisfactory size of accommodation could be achieved. However, these factors in the proposal's favour would not outweigh the harm I have identified. Such harm would extend to the Council's Local Area of Special Character made in recognition of the distinctive townscapes of the area. With regard to paragraph 135 of the National Planning Policy Framework the limited benefits that would be provided by three additional flats would not outweigh the harm to the non-designated heritage asset.
10. The proposal would therefore conflict with Policies CS8, DM10, DM11 and DM12 of the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames Local Development Framework Core Strategy 2012. These policies seek to protect the suburban character of the Borough and require new development to respect those elements contributing towards character including building typologies, building line build up, and set back, amongst other considerations. There would also be a conflict with the requirement to have regard to the pattern and grain of existing streets of Policy 7.4 of the London Plan.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

David Walker

INSPECTOR