

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 15 May 2017

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 7 June 2017

Appeal A Ref: APP/L3625/W/16/3164503

15 Chapel Road, Tadworth KT20 5SF

- 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 and Mrs N & S Preece against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00925/F, dated 19 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is removal of roof structure and installation of new pitched roof structure to accommodate a new single flat unit.
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Appeal B Ref: APP/L3625/W/16/3164504

15 Chapel Road, Tadworth KT20 5SF

- 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 and Mrs N & S Preece against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01783/F, dated 29 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is removal of roof structure and installation of new pitched roof structure to accommodate a new single flat unit.
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Appeal C Ref: APP/L3625/W/16/3164505

15 Chapel Road, Tadworth KT20 5SF

- 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 and Mrs N & S Preece against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01784/F, dated 29 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is removal of roof structure and installation of new mansard pitched roof structure to accommodate a new single flat unit.
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Decision Appeal A

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Decision Appeal B

2. The appeal is dismissed.

Decision Appeal C

3. The appeal is dismissed.
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Procedural Matters

4. The appeals relate to alternative proposals for the same building. I have therefore dealt with them in a single decision letter.
5. The Council has advised that it is no longer seeking a contribution towards affordable housing. I have proceeded on this basis.

Main Issue

6. The main issue in each case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

7. Chapel Road is an attractive residential street with a leafy, semi-rural character. It contains dwellings in a varied mix of architectural styles, mainly traditional, set in verdant surroundings. No 15 is a late twentieth century building containing two flats. The property lies midway along Chapel Road, near its junction with High Street. It is unusual due to its full gable-on presentation to the highway. Although I saw a diversity of roof forms in the area, the bias in the vicinity of the appeal site is towards hipped and half-hipped roofs with occasional forward facing gables to provide visual interest.

Appeal A

8. The proposal is to replace the existing shallow dual-pitched roof with a steeper gabled roof, to provide a third flat within the roof space. The resultant building would be noticeably taller than those on either side. Set against the modest hipped roofs of adjacent properties, the additional height and gable mass would appear disproportionately bulky. Flat roof dormers are not characteristic features of the area and therefore these elements of the scheme, whilst subservient in scale and set within the roof slopes, would be visually incongruous.
9. The existing building is fairly innocuous. The appeal scheme would significantly increase its prominence in the street scene and in my view this would materially harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposal would thus conflict with saved Policies Ho9, Ho13 and Ho16 of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Local Plan 2005 (LP). These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework in seeking to secure high quality design which responds to local character and history, and reflects the identity of local surroundings.

Appeal B

10. This scheme would be almost identical to Appeal A, except that the gable would be truncated leaving a section of flat roof linking two opposing mono-pitches. Although this design variant would minimise the overall height increase, it would lead to a roof form which is completely at odds with the more conventional pitched roofs which predominate in the area. The proposed flat roof dormers would add to the harm for the reasons I have set out above.
11. It is contended that this proposal would promote local distinctiveness. Whilst there may be occasions when distinctive buildings are acceptable, much depends on their intrinsic qualities and planning policy at national and local level advocates local context as the starting point for shaping development schemes. In this particular case, I am not persuaded that the design being put forward is of such high standard as to justify its unique appearance.

12. I therefore conclude on Appeal B that the proposal would have an unacceptable adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to the aforementioned development plan policies.

Appeal C

13. The third proposal is for the replacement of the existing dual-pitched roof with a mansard structure. It is argued on behalf of the appellants that the scheme would reinforce local distinctiveness. However, mansard roofs are not characteristic of the local area. The building shown photographed in the Design and Access Statement – used in part justification for the scheme – is an isolated example in a neighbouring road. Given the bulky and austere appearance in that case, I am not convinced that a mansard roof would fit comfortably into the street scene of Chapel Road. In my opinion it would look rather alien.
14. Accordingly, I find that the proposed mansard roof would be an inappropriate addition to the appeal property. Its design would fail to respect the character and appearance of the area and as such it would be contrary to Policies Ho9, Ho13 and Ho16 of the LP.

Other Matters

15. The appellants point out that none of the proposals would cause harm to the living conditions of neighbours or the health of the protected yew tree at the front of the site. Whilst these matters are not disputed, the absence of harm is a neutral factor in the overall planning balance.
16. I have taken account of the opportunities for renewable energy and sustainable design, and the very modest benefit to the supply of housing, but these factors do not outweigh the harm I have identified.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeals should be dismissed.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR