
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2017

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/17/3171981

61 Goldney Road, Camberley GU15 1DW

- 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 Gary Clayton against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/0767, dated 3 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 9 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is a first floor extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary matter

2. On the appeal form the appellant indicates that an application for costs will be made against Surrey Heath Borough Council. However, in an email dated 28 April 2017 he clarifies that no such application will be made.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The site falls within the Hedged Estates Character Area as defined in the Council's Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document 2012 ('SPD'). I observed that the area typically comprises dwellings set well back from the tree-lined roads, often behind landscaped front gardens. From the highway there are many views between and above the buildings to trees and woodland beyond. I therefore agree with the SPD's broad description of the area as having a green and verdant character, with well-spaced detached dwellings on generous plots.
 5. No. 61 Goldney Road has a flat-roofed projection which extends to the boundary with its higher-lying neighbour at no. 63. The proposed side extension would sit partly above that structure, but would be set in slightly from the boundary. No. 63 has a first floor extension close to the boundary, which has a broadly similar form to that proposed here.
 6. The slight set down of the scheme's ridge would provide some articulation and break up the resultant dwelling's mass. However, notwithstanding the
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- difference in levels, given the proximity of the proposal to the side elevation of no. 63, the two buildings would appear cramped, and, in many streetscene views could be perceived as a continuous block of development. The significant reduction in the gap above ground floor level between these two properties would be at odds with the area's more spacious character.
7. Trees and hedgerows in the front gardens of both properties would partly screen the proposal, but that impact on the area's spacious character would still be apparent in the streetscene, including looking down the driveway of no. 61. Furthermore, although the tall trees to the rear would continue to be visible above the property's ridgeline, given the very narrow gap there would be little view of them between the buildings.
 8. The appellant states that the four houses opposite no. 61 have the same gaps between them as is proposed here. I do not have dimensions to make direct comparisons, although, on the basis of my visit, and as evidenced by the submitted location plan, the gaps between them appear to be generally larger. In particular, those buildings have roofs which slope down to the sides and they therefore have significant gaps at that level which often provide good views from the highway to the trees beyond. Whilst no. 28 Goldney Road has a large two storey side projection, that development is set in from the boundary with no. 30, which has an open-sided single storey car port to that side. Consequently, there are material differences between those examples and this scheme, and they do not change my conclusions regarding the harm that this proposal would cause.
 9. Finally, although this scheme is similar in many regards to the extension at no. 63, that development is not typical of the area, and I understand that it was approved prior to the adoption of the SPD.
 10. As the scheme would harm the local area's character, it would conflict with one of the requirements of policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2001 – 2028 (2012), and with paragraphs 56 and 60 of the National Planning Policy Framework which promote good design and local distinctiveness.
 11. The SPD sets out at HE1, HE2 and HE3, that new development should pay regard to the space between buildings to maintain the area's verdant character, and that closely set buildings resulting in a cramped appearance or erosion of the area's soft green character will be opposed. The scheme would conflict with that guidance.
 12. The appellant has expressed his dissatisfaction with the Council's handling of the application, including delays and a lack of communication. I also note that there were no objections from neighbours. However, I have dealt with the scheme before me on its merits, and for the above reasons have found that it would harm the area's distinctive character and appearance. For that reason, and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR