The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 May 2017

by Andrew Dawe BSc(Hons) MSc MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P5870/W/16/3168066
42 Blenheim Road, Sutton, Surrey SM1 2PX

- 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 Ray Farrington (Rectory Park Homes) against the decision of the Council of the London Borough of Sutton.
- The application Ref B2016/75513/FUL, dated 26 September 2016, was refused by notice dated 6 December 2016.
- The development proposed is a three bedroom house with associated parking, landscaping, refuse and cycle storage, and new vehicular accesses to Blenheim Road.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. The Council, in its decision notice refers to its Supplementary Planning Document SPD14: Creating Locally Distinctive Places – Sutton's Urban Design Guide (the SPD). I have afforded some weight to that document due to its role in supporting the relevant development plan policies.

3. There have been four previous appeals relating to different proposals for this site three of which were dismissed and the fourth, and most recent one, having been allowed. I note that the latter was in relation to a replacement of that existing at No 42 and not including a separate new building as proposed in the current proposal. It is therefore a materially different scheme to that concerning the current appeal which I have determined on its own merits based on all of the submitted evidence.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are:

   i) the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area;

   ii) the effect of the proposed vehicular accesses on the provision for on-street parking.

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. The site is located in a prominent position within the street close to where it bends and at the northern end of the row of semi-detached dwellings on that side. The proposed dwelling would be sited on a large part of the existing side garden area for No 42. The other houses in the street all have similar designs, including front ground floor bays and part-hipped roofs, creating a pleasing degree of continuity despite some alterations and additions.

6. Although a detached dwelling, the proposal would include some similar design features to those existing dwellings, including in respect of the overall width and symmetry of fenestration. However it would not include the distinctive front bays, but instead only the roof canopy elements over the ground floor windows. This would allow space for parking at the front, parallel to the street. However, such an arrangement would not be characteristic of other properties in the street and would be likely to draw disproportionate attention to the forward position of the front elevation in relation to the main front elevations of those existing dwellings on that side of the road.

7. The parking arrangement would also necessitate a substantial width of largely unbroken hard surfacing across a large proportion of the wide site frontage, extending significantly beyond the line of the northern side elevation. The proposed dwelling would also have narrower part-hipped side elevations, and correspondingly steeper roof pitch, than the existing properties in the street. In that respect, the northern side elevation would be particularly exposed and visible from the street on the approach from the north.

8. These factors would combine to cause the proposed dwelling to appear cramped within the restricted depth of the site and a jarringly uncharacteristic feature in the context of the existing prevailing degree of continuity of design in the general streetscene.

9. For the above reasons, I conclude on this issue that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. As such, it would be contrary to the London Borough of Sutton Local Development Framework Core Planning Strategy policies BP12 and PMP2 and Site Development Policies DPD policies DM1 and DM3, policies 7.4 and 7.6 of the London Plan 2016, and the SPD which together, in respect of this issue require development to maintain and enhance the local character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would also be contrary to the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which, in paragraph 17, sets out that planning should, amongst other things, always seek to secure high quality design and take account of the character of different areas.

Provision for on-street parking

10. Although many properties in the street have off-street parking, several do not and so would be likely to rely on on-street parking. Such parking is limited by a combination of vehicle cross-overs and, along one side of the northern end of the road, double yellow lines. The street is also located close to a rail station and so would be likely to provide convenient parking for those splitting their journey between car and rail.

11. I also note that the Council's Senior Highways Engineer has commented that the road is saturated with parking, and that local residents have raised concerns in this respect. However, this is not supported by any survey evidence. I have also had regard to there being no substantive evidence submitted to demonstrate that previous fairly recent proposals for development on the site, including those considered at appeal, raised concerns from the Council or my colleagues in respect of the loss of on-street parking provision. Furthermore, I have not received any substantive evidence to indicate that the on-street parking situation has materially changed since those previous decisions were taken.

12. I also observed, albeit on a snapshot basis, that whilst the amount of on-street parking is limited and was fairly heavily subscribed at the time of my site visit, there was nevertheless a small amount of space available.

13. The proposal would involve creating two separate cross-overs to serve parking for the existing dwelling at No 42 and that proposed. This would be in addition to an existing parking space at the northern end of the site that would be retained. As such, the proposals would remove existing on-street parking where the new accesses would be created. However, it could be reasonably expected that the creation of an additional off-street space for No 42 would simply lesson the likelihood of, and existing demand for, its occupiers to park on the street, albeit that there is already one such space existing. In this respect, I have also had regard to there being extant planning permissions for two separate schemes at the site, one granted by the Council and the other on appeal, both of which would include a new vehicle access.

14. In this case, I acknowledge that there would be a further vehicle access for the proposed new dwelling. However, its width would not amount to the length of a car parking space, such that the amount of on-street space lost would not be substantial. The proposed off-street parking would also prevent the likelihood of the additional cars associated with the development spilling out on to the road, and I have no substantive basis for considering that those spaces could not be sufficiently easily accessed.

15. For the above reasons, it would be unlikely that the proposals would reduce the supply of on-street parking space to a level that would materially reduce the availability of spaces for existing local residents or pose any additional risk to highway safety from inappropriate parking.

16. I have also had regard to the Framework which in paragraph 32 sets out, amongst other things, that development should only be prevented or refused on transport grounds where the residual cumulative impacts of development are severe. Given my findings above, I have insufficient basis for considering that, even if there would be a small impact, it would be severe.

17. For the above reasons, I conclude on this issue that the proposed vehicular accesses would not cause unacceptable harm in respect of the provision for on-street parking. As such, it would accord policy DM22 of the Site Development Policies DPD which requires appropriate parking provision for new developments. It would also accord with paragraph 32 of the Framework.

Conclusion

18. The Framework sets out that there should be a presumption in favour of sustainable development and indicates that to achieve that, economic, social and environmental gains should be sought jointly and simultaneously through the planning system.

19. I have found that the proposal would not cause unacceptable harm in respect of the provision for on-street parking. However, this does not deflect from my finding that it would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. Furthermore, I find there to be no benefits related to the proposal sufficient to outweigh that unacceptable harm. It would therefore not be a sustainable form of development.

20. Therefore, for the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Andrew Dawe

INSPECTOR