
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 June 2017

by David Walker MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 29th June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/17/3170769

41 and 43 Doods Park Road, Reigate RH2 0PU

- 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 J Cowling of Northfield Development Consultants Ltd against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01594/F, dated 5 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 25 November 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing buildings and closure of vehicular accesses. Erection of detached building comprising 12 residential flats (10 x 2-bedroom and 2 x 3-bedroom), bin store, formation of parking forecourt, provision of bike store, formation of new vehicular and pedestrian accesses, new hard and soft landscaping and associated works.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. Further to its decision on the application, and following a subsequent appeal decision into an earlier scheme, the Council has confirmed that it does not wish to defend its third reason for refusal. This related to the potential for harmful overlooking of a neighbouring property. On this basis I consider the main issues in the appeal to be the effect of the proposal on:
 - i) the character and appearance of the area, and
 - ii) the living conditions of the occupants of Nos 37 and 39 Doods Park Road in relation to scale and proximity and having regard to the availability of outlook.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. Doods Park Road has a mixed character along its length as a result of differing house designs and a varying pattern of development. From the large block of flats at Howard Court the residential street leads on to a much smaller grain of development with semi-detached houses at the other end. Conversely, the appeal site is located towards the middle of the street where detached houses in large plots over planted frontages prevail.
 4. While Howard Court has a substantial massing in this context it is not readily seen in relation to the large houses around the appeal site. It sits in own tree-lined grounds opposite the back gardens and associated enclosures of the
-

houses at The Cedars. Therefore, while the bulk of Howard Court is cited as an example of precedent, it does not share the spacious and verdant character of the streetscene conditions in the immediate vicinity of the appeal site.

5. The amalgamation of the two plots of the proposal would facilitate a much greater amount of development than the two dwellings to be demolished. The resulting building would span the majority of the combined plot and extend to three storeys, above the height of Howard Court.
6. I acknowledge that the appeal scheme is the third iteration in the evolution of the design proposals and has drawn inspiration from the Surrey vernacular tradition to better assimilate into the area. This goes some way to reducing the perceived bulk of the scheme by introducing vertical elements in window proportions and in front facing gables and hips. There would also be a lower height two storey wing to one side.
7. However, in conjunction with the forward position that would accentuate the height of the building from streetscene views, this would not sufficiently reduce the bulk and its harsh contrast with the scale and layout of the existing houses. An Inspector reached similar findings in the previous appeal. Although this appeal scheme is lower overall it is taller at the side wing and of broadly similar scale and proportions. I have no reasons therefore to disagree with the previous Inspector's findings.
8. Existing tall trees on either side of the site would largely screen the proposal in oblique views along Doods Park Road, but provide little relief from the expansive view over the combined frontage. The proposal would remain prominent. I have given consideration to the scope for additional planting, but with only limited details provided it is not demonstrated that this could make the development acceptable.
9. Therefore, while I acknowledge the lack of technical objections on density, highways and tree grounds, the harm to the character and appearance of the area would conflict with Policy CS4 of the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy 2014 (the Core Strategy). This policy requires development to be of a high quality design and to take direction from the existing character of the area.
10. There would also be a conflict with saved Policies Ho9 and Ho13 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan 2005 (the Local Plan), and associated guidance, which require development to make the best of views into the site and the maintenance of the character of the area.

Living conditions

11. The proposal would be much larger than the existing bungalow at No 41 and introduce a two storey element where only a single storey exists. There would undoubtedly be a different outlook available to the occupants of the adjacent properties at Nos 37 and 39, as well as a general reduction in openness.
12. However, a reasonable degree of separation from the two neighbours would be retained, and increased in relation to No 37. Coupled with the hipped roof form that would help to reduce the massing effect and the extensive gardens that would remain available to the existing occupants, the loss of outlook would not be significantly harmful.

13. In this issue, therefore, I do not find unacceptable harm to living conditions. Accordingly, the proposal would not seriously affect or impact on the amenities of adjoining properties as sought at Policy CS4 of the Core Strategy and saved Policies Ho9 and Ho13 of the Local Plan.

Conclusion

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

David Walker

INSPECTOR