

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 July 2017

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 10 August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/17/3176349

1 Reigate Road, Ewell, KT17 1PL

- 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 A Goodgame against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01553/FLH, dated 19 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 16 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is to demolish an existing prefabricated garage and erect a two-storey side/single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. It is considered that the main issues are the effects of the proposed development on (a) the character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene and (b) the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring properties.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a 2-storey semi-detached dwelling situated adjacent to the Ewell Village Conservation Area. By reason of location, the gap between the side elevation of the property and the rear boundary of the properties fronting High Street/Epsom Road is wider than those between the other pairs of semi-detached dwellings fronting Reigate Road. Within this gap is a single storey detached garage.
 4. Planning permission has previously been granted for alterations to the dwelling which included a large side dormer within the roofslope at first floor level and a single storey side extension which would occupy part of the gap (Ref 14/01387/FUL). Only the dormer has been erected and it reflects alterations undertaken at other semi-detached dwellings originally of similar design, including at 3 Reigate Road. No. 3 is the other property forming this pair of semi-detached dwellings and, accordingly, they possess a generally symmetrical appearance. Although their detailed planning circumstances have
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not been provided, the appellant has also identified that some other nearby dwellings have been altered but some of these alterations are not of a particularly high quality of design.

5. The proposed development includes the erection of a 2-storey side extension and a single storey rear addition. The footprint of the proposed side extension would occupy a significant part of the gap albeit the first floor element would be sited further away from the boundary than the ground floor flank wall. The Council's Conservation Officer has assessed that the proposed development would not harm the setting of the Conservation Area and, based upon the site visit, there are no reasons for me to reach a different judgement.
6. However, by reason of scale, the proposed development would significantly increase the width of the existing property materially adding to its bulk and substantially eroding the gap. Although the ridge of the proposed roof would be lower than the side dormer, because of its scale, width and bulk the proposed side extension would not be a subservient addition to the host property. The resulting property would appear substantially larger than similarly designed semi-detached dwellings fronting the road. Further, as claimed by the Council, the scale of the proposed extension would unbalance the symmetrical appearance of this pair of semi-detached dwelling.
7. Although the first floor element would be sited to the rear of the front elevation, the significant harm which has been identified would be noticeable from the road. By reason of their angled relationship, this harm would be accentuated by the significant loss of the gap between the property and the properties fronting High Street/Epsom Road, especially at first floor level. In reaching this judgement account has been taken of the approved single storey side extension which would be smaller in scale and, even with the retained garage, maintain a reasonable impression of gap, especially at first floor level. The retention of a catslide roof and the use of matching materials would not address this harm.
8. it is, therefore, concluded that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene and, as such, it would conflict with Policy CS5 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy (CS), Policies DM9 and DM10 of the Epsom and Ewell Development Management Policies Document (DMP) and the Council's *Supplementary Planning Guidance for Householder Applications* (SPG). Amongst other matters these policies require development to be of a high quality of design and respect the character and distinctiveness of an area, including by reason of scale, form and spaces between buildings. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's (the Framework) core policy of securing high quality design.

Living Conditions

9. The proposed side elevation would be sited close to the shared boundary with the properties fronting High Street/Epsom Road. At ground floor level these properties are in commercial use but, based upon what could be observed, there are residential uses above with access from the rear. At the rear of these properties are courtyard style gardens. There is also a communal garden which is located to the rear of the proposed side extension.

10. At first floor level, the proposed side extension would include a bedroom which would have openings to the rear and front. The rear window would overlook the communal garden. However, because of the front opening, it would be possible to impose a condition requiring this window to be obscurely glazed and not opening below a specified height to avoid overlooking and loss of privacy. Similar restrictions could equally apply to the proposed landing window.
11. Concerns have been expressed by the occupiers of neighbouring properties regarding the loss of light and outlook and the appeal scheme being overbearing. However, the Council has assessed that these matters would not cause unacceptable harm. By reason of the potential to erect a fence to screen the outlook from the proposed ground floor openings, the setting back of the first floor element from the shared side boundary and the orientation of the properties, there are no reasons for me to disagree with the Council's assessment about these matters.
12. On this issue, it is concluded that the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties and, as such, it would not conflict with CS Policy CS5, DMP Policy DM10 and the SPG. Amongst other matters these policies require development to have regard to the amenities of the occupant and neighbours, including in terms of outlook, privacy and sunlight/daylight. This policy is consistent with the Framework's core principle of securing a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings.

Other Matters

13. Local residents have raised a number of other concerns, including the potential for the extension to be occupied as a separate dwelling; noise and disturbance especially during the building works; loss of parking and traffic generation; highway safety; an unwelcome precedent being established for other schemes and the impact on biodiversity interests. Based upon what was observed during the site visit and the potential to impose suitable conditions to address some of these concerns, these matters do not alter the main issues which have been identified as the basis for the determination of this appeal.
14. The appellant has identified family circumstances associated with the need for the additional accommodation proposed. Although these needs have been carefully noted they do not outweigh the identified unacceptable harm.

Conclusion

15. Although the proposed development would not cause unacceptable harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties, this issue is significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the unacceptable harm which would be caused to the character and appearance of the host property and the streetscene. Accordingly, and taking into account all other matters, it is concluded that this appeal should be dismissed.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR