



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 August 2017

by Grahame Gould BA MPhil MRTPI

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

Decision date: 31st August 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/W/17/3174610

3 Benfleet Close, Cobham KT11 2NR

- 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 J F Hasselbaink against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2017/0172, dated 15 January 2017, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2017.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing two storey dwelling, and erection of two storey dwelling and garage with habitable second floor within roof space, including roof dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The development would involve the demolition of 3 Benfleet Close (No 3) and its replacement with a six bedroom, two storey house with attic accommodation.
4. The main body of the house would have a rectangular floorplan and its front elevation would be of a Georgian inspired design. However, the two substantial wings would be slightly splayed relative to the main body of the house and would not be faithful to the symmetry of the house's main body. I consider that the wings would have an awkward relationship with the main body, with the result that the composition of the house's front elevation would be confused and have a sprawling mass. I am therefore of the opinion that the replacement house's design would be poor.
5. The siting of the house would mean that towards its front there would be little space between its wings and No 3's side boundaries. I therefore consider that the house would have the appearance of being shoehorned into its plot, a characteristic that would not be respectful of the streetscene.
6. The house would be discretely located in Benfleet Close and it would in part be screened, given the boundary planting towards the front of No 3's plot. There would therefore be limited views of the house from public vantage

points, however, I consider that circumstance does not justify a development that would be of a poor design. An argument that development would be largely hidden from view is one that could be used all too frequently and if accepted could nevertheless cause the character of an area, such as this, to be incrementally harmed.

7. I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. There would therefore be conflict with Policies CS10 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy of 2011, Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan of 2015 and paragraphs 17 (the fourth core planning principle), 56, 58, 60 and 64 of the National Planning Policy Framework. That is because the development would not be of a high quality of design, with the house's mass providing inadequate separation with the plot's boundaries and the house neither enhancing the area's character nor reinforcing its distinctiveness.

Other Matters

8. I accept that the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring houses would not be harmed. I also accept that appropriate amounts of garden space and on-site vehicle parking would be available. I also recognise that there would be no significant tree loss or any unacceptable risk of flooding. While those matters count for the development I find them to be outweighed by the harm that I have identified.

Conclusion

9. I conclude that the development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area and that the appeal should be dismissed.

Grahame Gould

INSPECTOR