
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 November 2017

by David Reed BSc DipTP DMS MRTPI

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

Decision date: 13 December 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/17/3181486

165 Cobham Road, Fetcham, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 9JD

- 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 Chris Green, Littleworth Properties against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2017/0219/PLA, dated 6 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is two semi-detached residential units, each with one parking space, cycle storage and side/rear garden.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area;
 - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of No 163 Cobham Road in relation to outlook; and
 - whether the proposal would provide acceptable living conditions for future occupiers in relation to external amenity space.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The proposal is for a pair of semi-detached houses on a rectangular site fronting Cobham Road adjacent to Fetcham local shopping centre. The appeal site lies opposite a retail parade but is situated between a two storey building comprising two flats on one side and a row of traditional semi-detached houses on the other. A previous application for a pair of semi-detached houses on the site was dismissed on appeal in January 2017¹.
4. In an area of mixed building types a pair of semi-detached houses would be an appropriate form of development, reflecting the pairs of semi-detached houses lining the road to the south east. The site is wider than that of most pairs of semi-detached houses in the area allowing ample space on each side for a pathway, car parking and cycle storage. In that respect, as illustrated by the spacious street elevation, the proposal would not appear cramped in the street scene. However, the site is not as deep as nearby plots and the pair of houses

¹ APP/C3620/W/16/3158687

would be set close behind the roadside verge and well forward of Nos 161/163 on one side and Nos 165/165A (the two flats) on the other. Breaching the building line to such an extent would result in an overly intrusive development when approached along the road from either direction. The ridgeline would be significantly lower than the buildings on either side and the roof fully hipped², but neither feature would fully mitigate this problem.

5. Although the plots of the two semi-detached houses would be smaller than the average in the neighbourhood this would not be readily apparent when passing the site. However, the houses would be located so close to the site frontage there would be little scope for even narrow front gardens which would be out of character with the area.
6. For these reasons the proposal would cause significant harm to the character and appearance of the area in conflict with Policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009 and Policies ENV22, ENV23 and ENV 24 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 (MVLP). These require new development to respect its setting, to respect and enhance the character of the area, to be appropriate to the site in terms of scale, form and appearance, to have regard to the space around buildings in the locality and resist poor quality design.

Living conditions – occupiers of No 163

7. There are no first floor windows in the side elevation of No 163 but unusually the property has its private garden to the side towards the appeal site rather than the rear. However, the new building would be set well away from the common boundary, more than sufficient to avoid an unduly overbearing appearance from within the neighbouring garden. The outlook of the occupiers of No 163 would not therefore be unduly affected in compliance with MVLP Policy ENV22 which seeks to protect the amenities of nearby occupiers from an overpowering effect.

Living conditions - future occupiers

8. The two new dwellings would have relatively modest private rear gardens, wide but rather short. However, the Council have no standards in this respect and, with a single living space and just two bedrooms, the properties are unlikely to accommodate families with a greater need for outside amenity space. The external amenity space for the new houses would therefore provide acceptable living conditions in compliance with MVLP Policy ENV22 which seeks to ensure a satisfactory environment for the occupiers of new development.

Conclusion

9. The proposal would provide two additional dwellings in a sustainable location which would make a small but useful contribution towards housing land supply and have social and economic benefits. However, these benefits are insufficient to outweigh the significant harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area. The appeal should therefore be dismissed.

David Reed

INSPECTOR

² Incidentally not a requirement of the previous Inspector who noted nearby gable as well as hipped roofs.