

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2019

by R J Maile BSc FRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 8th July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/19/3224906

Land at 47 Alma Way, Farnham, Surrey, GU9 0QH.

- 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 M Lee against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application ref: WA/2018/1871, dated 11 September 2018, was refused by notice dated 2 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is the construction of a detached one bedroom bungalow with new vehicle accesses and parking, following the demolition of the existing garage and outbuildings.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Government has published an updated National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019). I shall proceed upon this basis.

Main Issue

3. The main issue in this case is the effect of the development upon the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. 47 Alma Way comprises one of a pair of post-war, semi-detached houses, being located in an area of traditional two storey dwellings. A number of the adjacent properties, including 45 Alma Way opposite the flank elevation of the appeal site and 3 Poplar Walk, have been the subject of single storey extensions. The proposed bungalow would replace two single storey structures at the extremity of the rear garden of no. 47.
5. The appeal site is within the built-up area of Farnham, where the principle of residential development is acceptable. Development as proposed would assist in some small measure in meeting the Council's shortfall in the provision of housing within the District.

6. National policy at Chapter 2 of the Framework¹ sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 11). Chapter 5 refers to the Government's objectives of significantly boosting the supply of homes and providing a wide choice of housing. Small and medium sized sites can make an important contribution to meeting the housing requirements of an area (paragraph 68).
7. Similarly, Policy FNP15 of the Neighbourhood Plan² encourages proposals for one or two bedroom dwellings on smaller sites within the built-up area.
8. The appeal site is not within a Conservation Area or Area of Special Residential Character. It is nevertheless necessary for me to consider the proposal within its context, as required by paragraphs 127 and 130 of the Framework.
9. Policy TD1 of the Local Plan Part 1³ and Policy FNP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan require new development to be of a high quality and inclusive design that responds to the distinctive local character of the area in which it is located. Similar criteria are contained within "saved" Policies D1 and D4 of the Local Plan 2002⁴, including a requirement that development should be appropriate to the site in terms of its scale, height, form and appearance.
10. There is no hard and fast rule that single storey dwellings should not be sited within an area that comprises principally two storey houses, such that the principle of a bungalow within this location would not, of itself, be a reason to withhold permission. The detailed proposals would meet the required internal space standards for a one bedroom dwelling and I am satisfied that the modest amenity space to serve the proposed bungalow and that which would remain to no. 47 are adequate. The alternative parking arrangements have also been found acceptable by the Highway Authority.
11. Notwithstanding these comments the detailed scheme before me would appear contrived and cramped, the new structure being set back only 500mm behind the back edge of pavement. In particular, the east elevation of the bungalow would represent an incongruous and prominent feature by reason of its forward projection in front of the small open grassed area which abuts the northeast boundary of 2a Poplar Walk. This would be further exacerbated by the sloping nature of the open space and pavement of Poplar Walk adjacent to the appeal site.
12. These physical constraints to the appeal site arising from its restricted depth and hence the need to site the dwelling adjacent to the back edge of pavement have led me to find upon the main issue that development as proposed would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to the objectives of national policy at Chapter 12 of the Framework, Policy TD1 of the Local Plan Part 1, "saved" Policies D1 and D4 of the Local Plan 2002 and Policy FNP1 of the Neighbourhood Plan as referred to above.

Other Matters

13. As part of my site visit, I noted the relationship of the proposal to 47 and 49 Alma Way and to the adjacent dwellings in Poplar Walk.

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019).

² The Farnham Neighbourhood Plan (adopted July 2017)

³ The Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites (adopted February 2018).

⁴ The Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002.

14. I agree with the conclusions of the Council's Case Officer that development as proposed would not result in any harmful impact upon the residential amenities of these neighbouring occupiers, as required by "saved" Policies D1(c) and D4(c) of the Waverley Borough Local Plan 2002.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

R. J. Maile

INSPECTOR