



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 17 July 2019

by Martin H Seddon BSc MPhil DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 31st July 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/19/3227851

14 Darracott Close, Camberley, GU15 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 Charles Brewer against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 18/1057, dated 30 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 February 2019.
 - The development proposed is garage conversion, first floor side extension and loft conversion.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published in February 2019. I have taken the revised Framework into account in determining this appeal. In view of its content compared to that of the previous Framework, I consider that to do so would not prejudice the interests of the main parties in this appeal.
3. The Council has raised no objection to the proposed garage conversion or proposed rear dormer window. I agree that these elements of the scheme would have no significant detrimental effect on the amenity of neighbours.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposed first floor side extension on the character and appearance of the area, including the Contemporary Paved Estate Character Area.

Reasons

5. No.14 Darracott Close is a two storey detached dwelling located within a modern housing estate. Houses served by the cul-de-sac of Darracott Close are similar in form, style and the use of external materials. In most cases there is a narrow gap between the houses. In some instances, such as the appeal building, there is a gap at first floor level above a garage. These gaps add positively to the character of the estate as a whole and provide views between the buildings. They also prevent a potential terracing effect of the built development.

6. Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (DMP) policy DM9 seeks to ensure high quality design. It adds that development will be expected to incorporate and reflect design and character measures set out in either general or area specific Supplementary Planning Documents. The Council published a Western Urban Area Supplementary Planning Document (WUAC SPD) in 2012 which included the settlement of Camberley. Darracott Close falls within the character area of Contemporary Paved Estates.
7. The proposed first floor side extension above the existing garage would be prominent in the street scene. This is because it would be viewed almost directly ahead when approached along Darracott Close from its junction with Sovereign Drive. The gap between No.14 and No.15 above the garage allows pleasant views of trees in the distance. There are also overhead power lines, which are partly screened when the trees are in leaf, as at the time of my site visit.
8. The WUAC SPD advises that new development should have particular regard to, amongst other criteria, maintenance of space between and around buildings in Contemporary Paved Estate character areas and development that intensifies the existing tight character will be scrutinized carefully. I consider that the proposed side extension would conflict with the WUAC SPD because it would erode the existing gap above the garage that helps to give an open feel and appearance to the estate and which the WUAC SPD says will be resisted in Contemporary Paved Estate character areas. The resultant first floor side extension would also appear cramped in the street scene because of its proximity to the flank elevation of no.15.
9. The proposed first floor side extension would not increase the height or footprint of the building. However, it would be not be set down from the main ridgeline of the house or have an appreciable set back from the main front elevation of the building. The extension would therefore not appear subservient to the main building, contrary to Principle 10.3 of the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (RDG SPD). Principle 10.3 also seeks to maintain important gaps between buildings.
10. I find that the proposed first floor side extension would have a significant detrimental effect on the character and appearance of the area, including the Contemporary Paved Estate Character Area. It would conflict with Core Strategy and DMP policy DM9, WUAC SPD principles WUA3, CP1 and CP2, principle 10.3 of the RDG SPD and the design objectives of the Framework.

Other Considerations

11. The appellant has referred to alternative plans under permitted development rights involving extending the house to the rear. However, I have to determine the appeal based upon the plans refused by the Council.
12. The appellant has also drawn my attention to eight other first floor side extensions within Darracott Close. The extension at the adjacent property of No.15 was permitted in 2001, well before the Council's current development plan and supplementary planning documents were adopted.
13. The Council advises that the other extensions also date from a time before current planning policies were adopted. The exception is an extension at No.25

which is within a row of properties which have less regularity compared with the row including the appeal building. In particular, No.25 is set further back from Darracott Close than No.26. The site circumstances therefore differ from those at No.14 and I consider that this recent development does not set a precedent sufficient to allow the first floor side extension at the appeal site.

Conclusion

14. I have taken all other matters raised into account, including the stated purpose of the extensions for accommodating a family member. However, for the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Martin H Seddon

INSPECTOR