



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 2 July 2019

by J Gibson BUEP MPIA

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 August 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/19/3228740

15 Westminster Road, Maidenbower, Crawley RH10 7WZ

- 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 & Mrs J Pleydell against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref CR/2018/0886/FUL, dated 3 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 22 March 2019.
 - The development proposed was originally described as "first floor extension (over existing garage), garage conversion and single storey front extension (storm porch in-fill)".
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed

Main Issue

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site accommodates a two-storey detached dwelling. The dwelling includes a protruding side garage which is integrated within the overall building design. The design of the appeal dwelling is mirrored by the neighbouring property 17 Westminster Road. This results in a discernible gap between the two dwellings and a clear visual relationship. The overall area is characterised as residential, with a mix of detached, semi-detached and terraced building types utilised throughout the estate.
4. In immediate vicinity of the appeal site there are several examples where the existing building design of the appeal dwelling has been utilised, particularly along Westminster Road and Campbell Road. During my site visit I observed that wherever this building design was utilised (whether as a terraced, semi-detached or detached dwelling) it was co-located with similarly designed dwellings, achieving either a mirroring effect or to form a cohesive progression of the same dwelling. In the case of the appeal dwelling, it currently presents a mirroring effect with No 17. This building design was not observed to have been used in isolation.
5. The proposed first floor extension would serve to close the gap between No 15 and 17, unacceptably eroding the mirrored context of the two dwellings. The

design would consequently result in a building which is not sympathetic to No 17 in terms of its scale and massing. This would harm the character and appearance of the wider area by deviating from the established pattern and rhythm utilised for this dwelling design. This outcome would also represent an unacceptable departure from the clear planned mirror relationship that both No 15 and 17 share.

6. The appellants suggested that the first floor extension could be setback from the ground-floor extent to reduce the visual bulk of the proposal. However, I am required to assess the appeal proposal that is before me.
7. Accordingly, the proposed development would introduce an unacceptable level of harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal would conflict with Policies CH2 and CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030. These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that development achieves a high quality design which protects and enhances the distinctive character of places.

Other Matters

8. A list of historical planning decisions and properties were referenced in support of the appeal. Specific documentation and full details of the circumstances contributing to these historical decisions were however not provided. As such I am not in a position to understand why they were deemed acceptable. In any event, the appellant acknowledged that the decisions listed were all made prior to the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015-2030 being adopted. All appeals and planning applications must be determined on their own merits which is what I have done in this case.
9. The discussions between the appellants and the Council's Planning Officer during the assessment process are out of scope for this appeal as I am required to determine the proposal as it has been presented to me, which is what I have done.
10. I note the appellants' reasons for the proposal. However, personal circumstances seldom outweigh general planning considerations.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given above, the appeal is dismissed.

J Gibson

INSPECTOR