



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 October 2019

by A Blicq BSc (Hons) MA CMLI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 October 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/D/19/3234311

23 South Albert Road, Reigate, Surrey RH2 9DP

- 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 Nik Butterfield against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/00577/HHOLD, dated 21 March 2019, was refused by notice dated 16 May 2019.
 - The development proposed is increase in height for loft alteration incorporating side, top and rear roof lights.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. It appears that amended drawings were submitted during the application process. However, I have based my reasoning on the drawings used by the Council to determine the application and listed on the decision notice.
3. The appellant's statement notes that additional drawings were submitted with the appeal. However, as this is being determined under the Householder appeal procedure, their consideration could be prejudicial to the interests of the Council and other parties, as those parties have not had an opportunity to comment.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

Character and appearance

5. Number 23 South Albert Road (No 23) is a two-storey detached dwelling situated in a street lined mainly with detached and semi-detached dwellings of mixed age and style. The development would increase No 23's overall height and replace the double hipped roof with a crown roof, along with raised hips on the side elevations.
 6. Although many dwellings on South Albert Road appear to have extensions within the roof space, none that I noticed has increased the overall roof height in order to contain that accommodation.
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7. Moreover, having viewed No 23 from both directions I noticed that its ridge height is more or less aligned with the ridge heights of the other dwellings in the building line. Notwithstanding the variety of architectural period and style, as well as a relatively tight building pattern, double pitched and hipped roofs are predominant. I concluded that there is some underlying conformity of proportion, articulation and mass on this side of the road, particularly with regard to roof height and basic form.
8. The development's crown roof would be about 900 mm higher than the existing ridge. The dwelling's flank walls would also be raised significantly above existing eaves height, and would be topped by barn hips. A comparison of the proposed and existing elevations also suggests that the roof pitch would be increased.
9. This would represent a considerable increase in overall height as well as a substantial addition to No 23's bulk above eaves level. The appellant argues that the increase in height would not be significant. However, in the context of this building density, and No 23's current height, it represents a significant addition. It would not be of similar height to adjacent buildings, as argued by the appellant.
10. Moreover, the building line on both sides of the road dominates the street scene and No 23's increased height and bulk would be both incongruous and prominent in the street scene. I agree with the Council that the dwelling would appear top heavy and disproportionately bulky. It would appear poorly designed alongside the more refined typology of the nearby buildings and would also detract from the proportions and styling of the host dwelling. I appreciate that No 23 is slightly set back from the building line, but this is not particularly apparent. Number 23 appears no less prominent than its neighbours.
11. On the opposite side of the road some dwellings have box dormers with shallow cat slide roofs. However, these do not project above the ridgeline. Moreover, even if instances of similar harm exist it does not necessarily warrant extending that harm.
12. The appellant argues that even though no barn hip roofs exist on South Albert Road, the development would be in character with the area. However, it is difficult to see how this could be the case. The proposals would notably diverge from the underlying height and scale of the building pattern and fail to relate to or reflect the styling of existing dwellings.
13. The appellant refers to the SPG¹. Although an extract from this has been submitted, it is the chapter referring to rooflights and dormers. As the main component of the development is a new roof, I give this limited weight. The chapter submitted does not demonstrate that the proposed roof form would conform with the SPG.
14. It is argued that nearby dwellings have been granted permission for roof extensions. However, there is nothing before me to suggest that those permissions are comparable to what is proposed here. In any case, each appeal is determined on its merits.

¹ Householder Extensions and Alterations, March 2004

15. With regard to Paragraph 118 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), this requires upward extensions to be consistent with the prevailing height and form of neighbouring properties which would not be the case here.
16. I conclude that the development would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the area. It would be contrary to Policy HO13 of the Local Plan (LP)² which emphasises the importance given to maintaining the character of an area when considering residential development. It would also be contrary to LP Policy HO16 which states that on frontage plots consideration is to be given to the development's relationship with existing properties. Finally, the proposals would fail to comply with LP Policy HO9 which states that the scale of development should complement and not be detrimental to an area's character, amongst other considerations.
17. Even if I had given lesser weight to the cited policies, the development would be contrary to Paragraph 127 of the Framework. This is concerned with good design and requires development to be visually attractive and sympathetic to the local built environment, amongst other considerations.

Other matters

18. I appreciate that the Council may have indicated that the development would be received favourably. However, it remains that permission was refused.
19. Interested parties have also raised concerns. However, as I have found harm in relation to the main issue it is not necessary for me to consider these further.

Planning balance

20. The Council cannot demonstrate a five-year housing supply and consequently, it is argued by the appellant that the Local Plan is out of date. However, Paragraph 12 of the Framework states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not alter the status of the development plan as the starting point for decision making. Moreover, the relevant policies for determining this appeal are not concerned with housing supply and there is nothing before me to suggest that the cited policies are inconsistent with the Framework. I appreciate that Paragraph 33 of the Framework states that local plans should be reviewed every five years. However, this paragraph also states that following review they should be updated 'as necessary'. Consequently, I see no reason to afford the cited policies anything other than full weight.
21. I appreciate that the appellant considers there is not suitable alternative accommodation in the area but this does not justify the harm arising from this development to the street scene. The use of materials sympathetic to the area would not diminish that harm.
22. Even if I had given the local policies reduced weight, I have found harm in relation to guidance in the Framework. As such, I conclude that the adverse effects of the development would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the limited benefits arising from the additional accommodation at No 23.

² Borough Local Plan 2005

Conclusion

23. In the light of the above, I conclude that the development would fail to comply with the relevant policies of the development plan or national guidance, and that consequently the appeal should be dismissed.

A Blicq

INSPECTOR