
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 26 November 2019

by C Beeby BA (Hons) MIPROW

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23rd December 2019

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/19/3232914

6 Warwick Close, South Holmwood RH5 4NN

- 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 Mrs Louisa Scrase-Wiles against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2018/1622/PLA, dated 4 May 2018, was refused by notice dated 21 January 2019.
 - The development proposed is 2no 2 bedroom dwellings attached to the existing dwelling with off street parking spaces.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the appeal proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies in a residential estate characterised by dwellings which are reasonably well set back from the highway. Properties are generally well spaced, with reasonably sized front and side gardens. A spacious appearance results from these factors. The site has a corner location, and has a prominent position as a result.
4. The site lies at the end of a row of semi-detached dwellings. The side, front and rear gardens of the host dwelling form an apron of land around it, which holds a small single storey outbuilding which adjoins the host dwelling. The low height and limited footprint of the outbuilding and the level of surrounding open garden are features which contribute positively to the spacious appearance which characterises the area. Dwellings in the area generally have hipped or pitched roofs. Minimal divergence from this relative uniformity in roof design is evident.
5. The proposed dwellings' two-storey height and significant breadth close to the site boundary would give rise to a cramped appearance. This would reduce the characteristic spaciousness of the prevailing pattern of development, with resulting harm to the area's appearance.
6. Dwellings within the same row lie closer together than some others on the estate. The appeal scheme would elongate the line of properties. An

- impression of unbroken built form would result from these factors, of a degree which would be incongruous within the area.
7. The use of a "crown" roof, with a flat element, would be inconsistent with the prevailing relatively uniform design of roofs in the area. The uncharacteristic roof design would be additionally apparent as a result of the development's end terrace location. It would consequently appear out of keeping within its setting.
 8. The existing boundary hedge would offer only limited screening of part of the ground floor and gardens of the development. Views of the majority of the two dwellings would be uninterrupted from much of the surrounding public realm.
 9. No 32A Warwick Close has been constructed next to the dwelling opposite the appeal site, and adjoins a similar end pair of semi-detached dwellings, so that the three dwellings now form a terrace. The appeal scheme would lie closer to the site's boundary than the scheme at No 32A, and would result in the impression of a more restricted garden area. Furthermore, the scheme at No32A was for a single dwelling only, which allows for more spaciousness around the building than the appeal proposal. As a result of these factors the other scheme was materially different from the appeal proposal, and therefore it does not provide justification for it.
 10. Reference has additionally been made to the presence of extensions to other properties in the vicinity of the appeal site. Whilst these schemes have elongated the dwellings concerned by some degree, they have generally retained the area's characteristic spaciousness, and have a less prominent position than the appeal site. Furthermore, they relate to the extension of a dwelling rather than the construction of two new dwellings. Therefore I have not identified particular similarities with the appeal scheme which might lead me to an alternative conclusion on the matter even if harm were to result.
 11. For the above reasons the appeal proposal would result in moderate harm to the character and appearance of the area. The scheme therefore conflicts with Policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy (2009) and Policies ENV22, ENV23 and ENV24 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (2000), which together require development proposals to respect their setting, and to avoid a cramped appearance. Further conflict exists with the aims of the National Planning Policy Framework ("the Framework") in respect of good design.

Planning Balance and Conclusion

12. The Council states that it cannot demonstrate a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites. The policies which are most important for determining the appeal are therefore to be considered out-of-date, in accordance with paragraph 11d) of the Framework. Thus, it is necessary to grant permission unless, amongst other things, any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the Framework policies taken as a whole.
13. There would be a small benefit from the provision of the dwellings that would make a positive, albeit limited, contribution to the housing supply. Economic benefits would also arise from the construction and occupation of the new houses. The appeal site lies in a location with access to a limited range of services and facilities.

14. Any lack of harm in respect of the proposal's design, its parking arrangements and its effect on the living conditions of adjacent occupiers are relatively neutral matters. There is minimal substantive evidence before me to suggest that the host and new dwellings would be affordable for first time buyers, or that constraints on development in the district limit its ability to meet housing needs. Thus, these matters do not attract any particular weight in my determination.
15. The lack of significant objection to the proposal is, similarly, a neutral matter. The parish council comments that it would raise no objections if the proposal were for one dwelling only. Therefore this comment does not express support for the development of two dwellings at the site.
16. The harm to the character and appearance of the area would be unacceptable. As a result, the environmental aspect of sustainable development would not be achieved. Overall, I find that the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits. Therefore the proposal would not be a sustainable form of development when considered against the Framework taken as a whole.
17. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Beeby

INSPECTOR