



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 January 2020

by Helen B Hockenhull BA (Hons) B.PI MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 20 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/19/3235571
25 Hornbeam Road, Guildford, GU1 1LR

- 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 Konstantin Gogol against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/P/00129, dated 14 December 2018, was refused by notice dated 15 March 2019.
 - The development proposed is extensions to existing house, rear single storey extension, side two storey extension, partly wrapping the rear of the house and loft conversion with hip to gable roof and rear dormer – subdivision of unit to create new separate 2 storey 2-bedroom house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The Council's decision notice refers to the emerging Guildford Borough Local Plan. Since the determination of the original planning application, the new Local Plan has been adopted. I am advised that a number but not all the saved policies of the 2003 Local Plan have been superseded. I have taken account of this new policy position in my consideration of this appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues in this case are:
 - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area;
 - whether the proposal provides a suitable standard of accommodation for future occupiers;
 - the effect of the proposal on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).

Character and appearance

4. The appeal site forms a two-storey end terrace property. The side elevation of the property faces onto an area of open space either side of Medlar Close, resulting in the property being highly visible in the street scene. The surrounding area is characterised by semi-detached and terraced properties of

similar design and materials with generally long gardens. Whilst some dwellings have single storey side extensions, overall this consistency provides the area with a generally uniform character. I observed on my site visit the absence of roof enlargements in the terrace block in which the appeal property is located and also within the wider area, though a couple of properties have rooflights installed.

5. The appeal scheme proposes a single storey rear extension, a two-storey side/rear extension set back from the front elevation of the property with a hip to gable roof extension and a rear dormer. Viewed from the front elevation, the proposed set back gives the extension a subordinate appearance to the host dwelling. However, the wrap around extension results in a combination roof form. This would be out of character with the simple hip roof and front gable of the property at the other end of the terrace row and of other end terraced dwellings in the locality. The proposed rear dormer due to its extent across most of the rear roof plane, would form a dominant feature, unbalancing the symmetry of the terrace block in which the appeal property is situated. Furthermore, as a result of the dwellings prominent corner position adjacent to an area of open space, the proposed extensions would be highly visible, impacting negatively on the character of the street scene.
6. The proposed sub division to create 2 separate dwellings would result in the properties each having small back garden areas with a width of approximately 4.5 metres. These would be particularly small when compared to other terrace dwellings and uncharacteristic of the pattern of development in the area.
7. I am advised by the appellant that the appeal property benefits from an extant planning permission for a two-storey side and rear extension and also has a certificate of lawfulness for permitted development for extensions comprising a hip to gable roof enlargement and a rear dormer window with rear single storey extension. The appellant argues this provides a fall-back position should this appeal be dismissed.
8. However cumulatively these extensions are not of the same mass, scale and extent as those proposed in this appeal. They would physically overlap, and the appellant accepts that if amalgamated the dormer would need to be modified. The question of whether the combined extensions would still benefit from permitted development rights is not a matter for me in this appeal. A further consideration is that the permitted extensions would result in the enlargement of a single residential property, they do not provide a separate residential unit. Whilst these proposals demonstrate that in principle there is scope for the property to be extended, due to the differences I have outlined, I do not agree that they provide a viable fallback position.
9. I have had regard to the two-storey side extension at No, 46 Hornbeam Road. Whilst I accept that this affects the symmetry of the semi-detached pair, the extensions do not appear to be as extensive as those proposed in this appeal, and do not for example include the same alterations to the roof. Additionally, this scheme was granted planning consent in 1996 when different planning policies would have been in place.
10. Given the above, I consider that the appeal proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the host property and the local area. It would therefore fail to comply with Saved Policies G5 and H4 of the 2003 Guildford Local Plan and Policy D1 of the 2019 Local Plan. These policies seek to achieve

a high quality of design in new development that responds to distinctive local character. The proposal would also be in conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which in paragraph 127 aims to ensure that planning decisions are sympathetic to local character and provide visually attractive developments.

Standard of accommodation

11. The subdivision of the extended appeal property would result in the existing house (P1) having 3 bedrooms with accommodation in the roof space and a gross internal floor area of 107 square metres. The submitted plans suggest the property would accommodate 6 persons. Applying the nationally described space standards requirement of 108 square metres for 6 persons, the property would just be substandard. I accept that if the property were to be occupied by 5 persons, it would meet the required standards.
12. The new dwelling (P2) would have 2 bedrooms at first floor, a double and a single room, and an internal gross floorspace of 70 square metres. This would just meet the space standards for a 3-person dwelling.
13. Whilst the resultant properties would be on the margins of acceptability in terms of the space standards, it is important to also consider the layout of the property in determining whether the standard of the accommodation would be appropriate. The submitted plans maintain a good standard of ground floor living space for P1 and P2, however they illustrate an awkward and in places narrow room layout at first floor. This results in a poor living environment for future occupiers.
14. In terms of external space, the Council have commented on the small size of the proposed gardens. Whilst I accept these areas are very small, I have not been directed to any external space standards with which the development would conflict. The appeal site lies next to an area of public open space which would to an extent offset the limited private amenity space.
15. In terms of refuse provision, bin storage would be in the rear garden areas. The occupiers of P1 would need to take their bin through a narrow rear access arrangement which would necessitate passing the front door and living room and kitchen windows of the new property P2. This would not be a satisfactory arrangement to maintain the amenity of the occupiers of the new dwelling.
16. In summary, in light of the above factors, I consider that the appeal scheme would not provide a suitable standard of accommodation. The proposal would therefore conflict with Saved Policy G5 of the 2003 Guildford Local Plan and Policy D1 of the Guildford Local Plan 2019 which aim to provide well designed inclusive new development which promote community and healthy living. Furthermore, having regard to the objectives of the Framework, the proposal would not provide a high standard of amenity for future users.

Thames Basin Heaths SPA

17. The appeal scheme lies within 5 km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, which is an internationally designated site of nature conservation importance, with special reference to ground nesting birds. The proposal is likely to have a significant effect in combination with other plans and projects on the SPA through increased recreational pressure. The Council's Thames Basin Heaths Avoidance Strategy Supplementary Planning Document 2017 (SPD) provides

guidance on how the impact of residential development may be mitigated. This is primarily through seeking financial contributions towards the provision of a Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG) and a financial contribution to help fund Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM).

18. The appellant has provided a signed agreement under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act to secure the required financial contributions to the SANG and the SAMM to mitigate the impact of the development on the SPA.
19. However, as I have found that the scheme is unsatisfactory in other respects, it is not necessary for me to consider whether, subject to mitigation, the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the SPA either alone or in combination with other projects.

Other matters

20. The appellant has brought my attention to the Council's monitoring report dated November 2017 which indicated that the Council could not demonstrate a 5-year supply of housing land. Therefore, in line with paragraph 11 of the Framework, the policies most important in the determination of this appeal would be out of date. It is argued that the tilted balance is accordingly engaged. However, I am advised by the Council that since the adoption of the 2019 Local Plan, the Council can demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. I am satisfied from the evidence before me that this is the case. Accordingly, the proposal should be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
21. I acknowledge that the proposal would provide a new low-cost dwelling and contribute to the supply of housing, albeit the contribution of a single dwelling would be limited. The site is in an accessible location, close to shops on Stoughton Road and public transport connections to Guildford Town Centre. Whilst these factors weigh in favour of the scheme, they do not outweigh the harm I have found to the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area and the unsuitability of the proposed living accommodation.

Conclusion

22. For the reasons given above, and having had regard to all other matters raised, I dismiss this appeal.

Helen Hockenhull

INSPECTOR