



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 January 2020

by Graham Chamberlain BA (Hons) MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 January 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/19/3238829

3 Parr Close, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 7HD

- 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 Jieblin Zong against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2019/1315/PLA, dated 23 July 2019, was refused by notice dated 9 September 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as a 'new dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

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

Reasons

3. The appeal site encompasses part of the existing curtilage of 3 Parr Close (No 3), a semi-detached dwelling the western elevation of which is broadly located in line with the side of 1 Parr Close (No 1) and the front of an intervening garage. This set back adds a sense of spaciousness to the street scene, which is further enhanced by the position of other properties in Parr Close behind front gardens, many of which are planted or given over to lawns thereby providing a softening of the street scene. Parr Close encompasses single and two storey semi-detached properties, which are generally repeated house types with a similar plot layout. This, along with the street geometry affords the cul-de-sac a coherent and pleasant suburban character.
4. The appeal scheme is for the erection of a dwelling to the side of No 3. This would alter the semi to a terrace, which is a form of development not currently evident in Parr Close. That said, Parr Close is part of a larger estate where terraced properties are present, albeit utilising a particular terraced house type designed and positioned within the street in a comprehensive way. The appeal scheme on the other hand would result in an ad hoc and unbalanced terrace unlike any others nearby, including the terrace at the end of Boleyn Walk.
5. The dwelling would respect the front and rear building lines of the existing semi, but it would project further forward than the existing garage (to the north) and the two-storey element of No 1. This would erode the coherent

layout of the street and its overall sense of spaciousness, which is an important component of its suburban character.

6. As a result, and even when accounting for the narrow strip of land that would be retained between the road and the proposed dwelling, the property would have the appearance of having been discordantly squeezed in rather than being a natural and harmonious infilling. This in turn would erode the space available for soft landscaping, which is already limited by the boundary fence. A parking space would need to be provided in the front garden of the proposed dwelling in lieu of existing planting. Splitting the plot and providing smaller gardens would also curtail the space available for planting elsewhere in the plot.
7. In addition, the proposed house would be wider than No 3 with a different pattern of fenestration. As such, it would not respect the proportions and general appearance of the other properties in the semi or the house type more generally. Unbalancing the semi in this way would result in the proposed dwelling appearing out of place in the street scene, particularly as it would be unduly prominent to those entering the cul-de-sac given its projection beyond the adjoining garage. The use of matching materials would not mitigate for the relatively awkward proportions.
8. In conclusion, the proposed dwelling would harm the character and appearance of the area. This would place it at odds with Policy CS14 of the Core Strategy 2009 and Policies ENV22, ENV23 and ENV24 of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000, which seek to secure development that respects the character of an area, taking account of the scale, character, street pattern and proportions of the surrounding built environment. These policies are broadly consistent with Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the 'Framework') and therefore a conflict with them can be afforded significant weight.

Other Matters

9. 22 Tudor Walk (No 22) has been extended to the side, but the addition is smaller than what is proposed and does not have the appearance of a separate dwelling. The visual impact of the extension at No 22 is therefore different to the appeal scheme. 10 Tudor Walk (No 10) has a prominent side extension that has eroded the space to the side of the property. This is an isolated example that serves to confirm my concerns. That said, and like No 22, the addition at No 10 is overtly seen as an extension and therefore it does not appear squeezed in in the same way a separate dwelling at the appeal site would. 1 Parr Close has a single storey side extension but this has a very different visual effect to that of an additional two-storey dwelling at the appeal site. Thus, my findings are not inconsistent with other schemes permitted nearby.
10. The Council cannot currently demonstrate a five-year housing land supply as required to by the Framework and the shortage is serious at around 2.63 years. Thus, the tilted balance in Paragraph 11d) of the Framework is engaged as an important material consideration. This states that planning permission should be granted unless the adverse impacts of the proposal would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole.
11. The proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area contrary to Paragraph 127 of the Framework. In this respect it would be unsuitable when

applying Paragraph 68c of the Framework. The conflict with local and national policy is a matter of significant weight against the proposal.

12. Weighed against this, the delivery of a single home in a built-up location close to local services and facilities would be a benefit given the Framework's aim to significantly boost the supply of housing and promote sustainable transport. The serious undersupply of housing means the delivery of a single dwelling becomes a matter of added note.
13. In addition, the proposal could provide limited revenue to the Council and some modest support to the local economy through construction jobs and the 'spend' of future residents. The provision of a two-bedroom home would also help to address a housing need. However, the modest size of the proposal limits the extent of many of the aforementioned benefits. Moreover, evidence has not been submitted to suggest nearby services are failing for lack of patronage. As such, the economic benefits would be generic and limited. Overall, the benefits of the proposal are matters of moderate weight in its favour.
14. Consequently, the adverse impacts of the appeal scheme would significantly and demonstrably outweigh its benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. This does not indicate the proposal should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan.
15. Various concerns have been raised by interested parties including, for example, reservations regarding the adequacy of parking and the impact on highway safety and living conditions, which I have noted. However, given my overall conclusion it has not been necessary for me to address these matters further as the appeal has failed on the main issue.

Conclusion

16. The proposal would be contrary to the development plan and there are no other considerations which outweigh this finding. Accordingly, for the reasons given, the appeal has not succeeded.

Graham Chamberlain
INSPECTOR