
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 22 January 2020

by Neil Smith BA Hons BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/19/3241290

5 Weldon Way, Merstham RH1 3QA

- 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 Hasnain Hoosain against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/01317/F, dated 2 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 12 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is described as 'We have had planning recently approved for a double extension on our current residence. We would like to see if it would be possible to convert our current main residence to a 2 bed with additional storage upstairs and a studio for the garden to allow more outdoor living space. The front door placement will be moved as per planning for double extension. We would also like to use the footprint that has been accepted recently to erection a nice 1 bed house with own private garden and driveway.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the appeal proposal on:
 - i) The character and appearance of the area;
 - ii) The living conditions of the future occupiers with particular regard to internal floorspace; and
 - iii) Highway safety.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal property accommodates a two-storey, brick-built end of terrace dwelling with a tiled roof. It is on the corner of Weldon Way and Sutton Gardens. The dwelling faces onto Weldon Way with a side elevation fronting onto Sutton Gardens being set further back from the street than the adjoining dwellings in the terrace. It has a garden area which wraps around the dwelling to the front and side and an area of hardstanding which fronts onto Sutton Gardens. The dwellings in the area are of a similar design, being two and three-bedroom dwellings with generous garden areas to the front and rear.
4. The appeal proposal is for a two-storey extension to the side of the host dwelling to form a two-storey one-bedroom house. The ground floor would

follow the building lines of the front and rear elevations and the first-floor would be set back to reduce its bulk. It would have a gabled roof which would tie in with that of the host property. The appeal proposal is also for a single storey outbuilding in the rear garden of the host property. The Council did not oppose the outbuilding and from the evidence I have before me, I have no reason to reach a different conclusion.

5. The new dwelling would have an unacceptably narrow frontage, which would be inconsistent with the prevailing pattern of development of the larger dwellings in the vicinity. The garden area of the host property would be subdivided, and the appeal dwelling would have a garden area to the front and side with a new hardstanding area, which would provide access onto Sutton Gardens. Whilst the garden area would meet the minimum standards of amenity space, it would have an uncharacteristically short rear garden depth that would be out of keeping with the much larger rear gardens in the vicinity.
6. The appellant states that the footprint was agreed as part of the previous application for a two-storey extension. However, the character and appearance are different in this instance as it would be narrower than any of the dwellings in the area and also be two front entrance doors in close proximity to each other, which would have an unacceptable unbalancing effect on this terrace.
7. The proposal would, by virtue of its narrow frontage and small rear garden area, be a cramped and inharmonious development, which would be significantly harmful to the character and appearance of the area. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with Policies DES1 and DES2 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan (DMP) (2019), Policy CS4 of the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy (2014) and the Local Distinctiveness Design Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance (2004), which require, amongst other things, development to be of a high quality design that makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of its surroundings.

Living conditions – gross internal floorspace

8. The appeal dwelling would create a two-storey dwelling house, with a bedroom that would be sized as suitable for one person. It would have a gross internal area of approximately 38 square metres. Whilst the amount of floorspace would accord with the Technical Housing Standards – nationally described space standards 2015 (Space Standards) for a one-person, single storey dwelling, it would fall significantly below those for a two-storey dwelling. Bearing in mind that space is required for the staircase, which would be largely unusable for day to day needs, the appeal proposal would create an unacceptably confined space that would be significantly harmful to the living conditions of its future occupiers with particular regard to gross internal floorspace.
9. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with Policy DES5 of the DMP and the Space Standards, which require, amongst other things, development to provide good living conditions for future occupants.

Highway safety

10. The proposal would have an area of hardstanding fronting onto Sutton Gardens, which would be immediately adjacent to the existing hardstanding. I

am mindful from the Officer report, that the extent of the hardstanding is the same as consented under the previous application for a two-storey extension.

11. I observed from my site visit that there were numerous crossovers in the vicinity and that the traffic levels were relatively light on this quiet residential street. Whilst the application drawings do not illustrate a dropped kerb onto the public highway, I see no reason why one could not be constructed and secured by way of a planning condition, that would serve the appeal dwelling to provide adequate off-street car parking.
12. For these reasons, the appeal proposal complies with Policy TAP1 of the DMP which require, amongst other things, development to provides adequate vehicular access in particular with regard to manoeuvring and turning.

Other matters

13. The appellant has provided photographs of a small detached dwelling. However, I have not been provided with the address and any details of this scheme and therefore I cannot draw any direct comparison with the appeal proposal. The appellant argues that the dwelling would provide an additional dwelling and that it would be suitable as a starter home or for occupiers wishing to downsize from a larger home. However, the contribution to supply from only one dwelling would be a limited benefit in the overall planning balance.
14. The appellant also states that it is only financially viable to construct a new dwelling rather than the approved extension. This would not outweigh my conclusions on the main issues.

Conclusion

15. Whilst the development would not cause unacceptable harm in terms of highway safety, this does not overcome the significant harmful impact to the character and appearance of the area and on the living conditions of future occupiers with particular regard to gross internal floorspace.
16. For the reasons given above the appeal is dismissed.

Neil Smith

INSPECTOR