



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2020

by Matthew Jones BA(Hons) MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 February 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/19/3238771

3 Fowlers Croft, Compton GU3 1EH

- 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 Harvey Killen against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
- The application Ref 19/P/01123, dated 22 June 2019, was refused by notice dated 22 August 2019.
- The development proposed is described as '*side extension to garden and entry porch*'.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is whether or not the proposed development would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Compton Conservation Area.

Reasons

3. Fowlers Croft is a small residential cul-de-sac within the village of Compton, inside the Compton Conservation Area (the CA), accessed from the south via the B3000, which is the main road through the village. Fowlers Croft contributes to the significance of the CA through its planned and pleasant scene of similarly styled properties fronting a green. No 3 Fowlers Croft is a semi-detached, two-storey dwelling at the entrance to the cul-de-sac. A single storey addition extends from its north elevation, facing the green¹.
4. The proposal seeks to form a porch around the front door to the house, which is within its flank wall, and provide a single storey extension from its south elevation, set in from the building's south west corner. The extension's roof would pitch up from its eaves, plateau, and terminate directly below an existing first floor window. There appears to be no disagreement between the parties as to the acceptability of the porch, and I have no reason to take a contrary view.
5. Given its pivotal position, No 3 is part of the Fowlers Croft environment but also, along with its attached neighbour No 4 Fowlers Croft, offers a frontage to the B3000. As such, whilst I note the dispute between the parties as to what constitutes the front of the property, in practical reality both its north and south elevations contribute to their respective street scenes.
6. That being said, No 3 is separated from the B3000 by a substantial, evergreen box hedge and trees which almost entirely obscure its ground floor from view. Given the attractiveness of this greenery, and the role it plays in protecting No 3 from the highway environment, this situation seems unlikely to change. Due

¹ Approved by the Council in 2011 under Ref 11/P/00406

to this extent of this screening, the south building line of the property is not necessarily sacrosanct.

7. The walls of the proposed extension would be almost entirely obscured. Furthermore, as it would be set in from No 3's south west corner, it would not be read in combination with the existing extension. The structure would use matching materials and would be subservient to the property. The size of its openings and the degree of glass within its walls would provide a contrasting and lightweight appearance which would maintain the legibility of the original building. Its siting would align with the arrangement of No 3's south elevation.
8. However, No 3 is not experienced in isolation, and there is a designed, unifying symmetry between No 3 and No 4 which allows the building to make a strong and articulate contribution to the public realm along the B3000, albeit from the first floor upwards. The roof of the extension would be located at this level and visible from the B3000, particularly from the east. Given such, the symmetry between Nos 3 and 4 would be perceptibly diminished. In addition, whilst I acknowledge that the roof design matches elements of No 3, particularly its existing extension, its hybrid profile and proximity to the first-floor window would appear contrived in my view. For these reasons, the extension would be harmful to the building, and detrimental to the CA.
9. The appellant has drawn my attention to several extensions which have been added in Fowlers Croft. In the majority of the cases, the extensions appear to be hidden from public view. Although the similarly sited extension at No 1 Fowlers Croft is visible from the B3000, I do not find it to be a positive precedent for the proposal. Moreover, it has a low profile and does not interfere with the first floor of that dwelling in the manner that would be the case here. As such, these other extensions do not serve to justify the harm that would arise.
10. The harm to the CA would be less than substantial. However, any such harm merits great weight in accordance with Paragraph 193 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and falls to be weighed in the balance with the public benefits of the development. No public benefits have been suggested to arise from the scheme.
11. I therefore find that the proposed development would not preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Compton Conservation Area. It would conflict with the heritage and design aims of saved Policies G1, G5 and HE7 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (adopted 2003) and the Framework.
12. I have also had regard to the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document (adopted 2018) (the SPD). However, the SPD provides guidance which the document itself identifies cannot reflect every situation. Given the quite individual circumstances of the appeal property, the SPD therefore attracted limited weight in my assessment.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons outlined above, and taking all matters raised into account, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Matthew Jones

INSPECTOR