



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 11 February 2020

by Robert Hitchcock BSc DipCD MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 27 March 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/Z5630/W/19/3241245

1A Corkran Road, Surbiton KT6 6PL

- 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 Richard Gee against the decision of the Council of the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.
 - The application Ref 18/16774/FUL, dated 6 November 2018, was refused by notice dated 1 November 2019.
 - The development proposed is a two storey house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on the character or appearance of 1 Corkran Road and the Southborough Conservation Area (CA).

Reasons

3. The appeal site lies close to the junction of Corkran Road and Lovelace Road and consists of a garden area formerly part of the rear garden of Beech Court flats, a building facing Lovelace Road. It is situated within the CA, the significance of which arises from a layout of large fronted plots accommodating large detached houses with architectural and historic interests stemming from the mixture of styles arising during the 1860s to 1930s.
4. The adjacent property at 1 Corkran Road is noted for its character which demonstrates fine Arts and Crafts styling and has subsequently been identified as a Building of Townscape Merit (BTM) by the Council. The building lies uncharacteristically forward in its plot on the inside of a slight bend in the road. A sense of space derives from the gap formed by the appeal site and the remainder of the rear garden area of Beech Court to its north-western side. The BTM subsequently achieves a strong sense of prominence within the streetscape close to a main entry point into the CA. Together, the prominence of the building and the open aspect to the side contribute positively to the character and appearance of this part of the CA.
5. The proposal would retain the frontage screen to the site arising from the existing high boundary wall and mature planting. The building would be set back behind the line of no1 such that when taken with the slightly lower ground level of the appeal site, it would appear recessive in relation to the BTM. Whilst this would assist in retaining some of the prominence of no1 and would not

appear out of place in terms of the position and separation between buildings visible locally, the incursion into the space between no1 and Beech Court would reduce the existing sense of spaciousness.

6. Notwithstanding the appellant's stated distance of 5 metres to the BTM, the lower plot ratio and provision of ample amenity space about the proposed building, its presence within the gap would adversely impact the open setting of the BTM and the identified positive character of this part of the CA.
7. Furthermore, the slender proportions of the main gable façade and limited proportions of the footprint would provide a vertical emphasis to the development. Without the corresponding width, arising in part from the constraint of the plot dimensions, the proposal would fail to generate a scale of building commensurate with the proportions of development typical of this part of the CA. Notwithstanding the element of seclusion that would arise from the frontage screen, the scale of the development would be visible within the streetscene and contrast with an identified characteristic of the CA.
8. The appellant has advised that other instances of similarly scaled buildings within varied plot sizes are present at the peripheries of the CA, however, little evidence is provided to demonstrate the circumstances of those examples. In any case, the existence of development elsewhere does not represent an appropriate reason to find in favour of a proposal that would cause harm or lead me to alter my findings on this issue.
9. As the site is located within the CA, Section 72(1) of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires me to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the CA including buildings within it. Additionally, Policy DM12 of the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames Local Development Framework (LDF) requires development to preserve or enhance heritage assets including their setting and Policy 7.8 of the London Plan (2016) (LP) seeks to conserve their significance.
10. The undermining of the spacious setting of the BTM with a contrasting scale and form of development in addition to the loss of the positive open character of this part of the CA would cause harm to the character and appearance of the CA. Whilst this harm would be no greater than less than substantial within the context of Paragraph 196 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), less than substantial harm does not equate to a less than substantial planning objection.
11. I note the potential public benefits of the proposal in that the development would deliver a single private dwelling and would add to the housing land supply for the Borough. However, as a single unit this would be of limited public benefit in terms of housing delivery or in its associated economic contributions.
12. I also acknowledge that the site benefits from an existing vehicle access and could be developed without harm to the living condition of nearby residents. Whilst I have found that the set-back position would not jar with the existing layout of development, taking all of the above factors into account, either collectively or individually, I conclude that the limited public benefit arising from the proposed development would fail to outweigh the harm I have identified to the character of the CA.

13. For the reasons above, the development would fail to preserve the character or appearance of the CA and would result in a negative effect on the setting of a non-designated heritage asset within it. The proposal therefore conflicts with Policies CS8, DM10 and DM12 of the LDF, Policies 3.4, 7.4 and 7.8 of the LP and the Framework which, amongst other matters, seek to preserve or enhance local character and distinctiveness and protect heritage assets.

Other Matters

14. The appellant claims that the site would be undevelopable should it fail to obtain planning permission. Notwithstanding my awareness of previous attempts to secure other forms of development on the site, I have not been provided with evidence to substantiate that view. Accordingly, I am unable to attribute significant weight to it.
15. I have noted the other concerns submitted from local residents and third parties to the proposal. However, in the light of my findings on the main issues of the appeal, my decision does not turn on these matters.
16. I also note the frustrations expressed by the appellant in relation to the delays of the Council leading up to this appeal. However, this is not a matter for this appeal which I have determined on its own merits.

Conclusion

17. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

R Hitchcock

INSPECTOR