The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 7 October 2020

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 October 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/W/20/3250660
58 Ambleside Road, Lightwater, Surrey, GU18 5UH

- 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 S Herlingshaw against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
- The application Ref 20/0117/FFU, dated 3 February 2020, was refused by notice dated 31 March 2020.
- The development proposed is the erection of semi-detached two storey dwellings including rear dormers in roof space, side rooflights, repositioned vehicular access off Ambleside Road, rear storage shed and landscaping following demolition of existing dwelling.

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site is a rectangular curtilage with a brick built bungalow in situ in a poor state of repair. The site is alongside a private drive to rear development, with a large chalet bungalow beyond this access, and on the other side a two storey hipped roof dwelling with a single storey side element at its closest point. The area is residential in character with a variety of ages and types of homes usually on sizeable plots. The overall built pattern and landscape come together to create an area of pleasing suburban appearance with some sense of spaciousness. The appeal proposal is as described above for a handed pair of dwellings enjoying a shared vehicular access and frontage parking for two cars each.

4. Regrettably I consider that the appeal scheme would not sit comfortably in its context and would be jarring on the eye. The plots would be relatively too narrow and this would give a cramped appearance. I say this even allowing for the single access arrangement. The planned building beyond would be of substantial and symmetrical elevations not in accord with surrounding development. Two storey elements would run close to both side boundaries which tends not to be a feature locally. Where one finds larger properties along this road they are usually set back further on longer plots without the

degree of prominence which would arise on this site. Furthermore, the roof form, whilst not at unreasonable maximum height, would be out of kilter with the local norm by its extent and would be bulky and top heavy not least because of the excessive extent of the uncharacteristic flat roofed element at upper level. In short, in this locality, this over-ambitious development would simply lack suitable subtlety of design and would represent alien overdevelopment materially harmful to the street scene.

5. Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 is relevant. Amongst other matters, it calls for high quality design sympathetic to, and in scale and comparative density with, local context and protective of the quality of the built environment. I conclude that the appeal scheme would run contrary to this policy. The Council also cites conflict with principles within the Residential Design Guide 2017 and the Lightwater Village Design Statement 2007. I would agree that the relevant design objectives of these documents would be breached by the scheme in hand albeit I do acknowledge that this guidance cannot be expected to cover every detailed eventuality.

Other matters

6. I recognise that there are no technical, tree protection or residential amenity difficulties associated with the planned development. Additional planting is suggested by the Appellant to help integration. The scheme would increase housing supply and provide an economic and social benefit proportionate with the delivery of two houses. These are all matters of weight in favour of the appeal; however they do not outweigh the harm that I have found in this instance. Indeed I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.

7. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered. Key objectives of the document are to safeguard qualities of the built environment and the development plan policy and guidance to which I refer mirror these.

Overall conclusion

8. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the locality. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond
INSPECTOR