
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 September 2020

by John D Allan BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 28/10/2020

Appeal Ref: APP/N1730/D/20/3253196

8 Carlton Crescent, Church Crookham, Fleet, GU52 6AP

- 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 Bevins against the decision of Hart District Council.
 - The application Ref 20/00027/HOU, dated 7 January 2020, was refused by notice dated 6 March 2020.
 - The development proposed is the construction of new two-storey front and side extensions with single-storey front, side and rear extension on the residential dwelling house.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. At the time of the decision the Hart Local Plan (Strategy and Sites) 2032 (HLPSS) was at a significantly advanced stage of preparation, having been found to be sound following a Local Plan examination, with the Inspector's suggested minor modifications being accepted by the Council. In light of this, when determining the planning application, the Council gave appropriate weight to policies within the emerging plan in accordance with paragraph 48 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), in particular emerging Policy NBE10. Since the date of the decision the Council has adopted the HLPSS and Policy NBE10 has become part of the development plan for Hart although renumbered as Policy NBE9. In May 2020 the Council published the Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 Saved Policies (LP Saved Policies). The decision notice includes reference to Hart District Local Plan (Replacement) 1996-2006 policies GEN4 and URB12. The appellant has also referred within his grounds of appeal to Policies CON5 and URB16. None of these policies are included within the LP Saved Policies and they therefore no longer form part of the development plan for Hart.
3. The courts have confirmed that Inspectors need to make their decisions on planning appeals based on the development plan and national policy which are in place at the time of their decision rather than at the time of the Council's decision or at any other earlier stage. The development plan for the purpose of

my decision includes the HLPSS and the LP Saved Policies. Saved Policy GEN1 and HLPSS Policy NBE9 (referenced within the decision notice as emerging Policy NBE10) remain relevant. The wording of adopted Policy NBE9 is not materially different from the wording of the emerging Policy NBE10 and therefore I am satisfied that the adoption of the HLPSS has not changed the approach I need to take for my decision when compared with that taken by the Council.

Main Issue

4. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal property is located within a residential estate of similar aged properties. The Council's Urban Characterisation Study for Hart places the site within Character Area G where it is described, amongst other things, as including mostly semi-detached properties with some terraces, long narrow plots as commonplace, and a high degree of architectural uniformity. However, Carlton Crescent, and the immediately surrounding roads, comprise mostly detached, two-storey properties, many on noticeably wide plots. Although the area's original architecture includes repeat designs, there is a variety of design features between the dwellings, including examples where properties have been significantly remodelled. As such I was unable to detect any important sense of uniformity in the immediate area of the appeal site. I therefore see no reason to resist the appearance of the existing dwelling from being altered.
6. Although the shape of No 8 would be subsumed by the proposed changes to each side of the dwelling, the introduction of gabled features and a lean-to roof to one side would not appear atypical for the area. The resulting building would be reasonably articulated by varied storey heights, stepped changes to forward building lines, and a mix of finishing materials that would reflect other altered properties in the vicinity. Whilst it would be larger than some others, the dwelling would not, to my mind, appear over exaggerated in size. It would remain appropriately residential in scale and form.
7. The appeal site occupies a corner location at a road junction. In my view the visual prominence of the building as a result is significant, regardless of the property's location deep into a residential estate. A common feature in this area is a chamfered edge to the external boundaries for corner plots. From my own observations I saw that most corner buildings were recessed well away from their chamfered boundaries, naturally creating a sense of space and openness at the road intersections, amplified further by the wide sweeping curves of the pavements and grass verges.
8. The proposal includes a two-storey side extension to No 8 that would also project in front of the existing forward building line. When measured at a pinch-point, the front outside corner of the building would be just around 1.5m away from the back edge of the pavement as it runs obliquely across the intersection of Carlton Crescent with Barbara Close. Regardless of the distance measured to the road surface, this degree of proximity to the public domain would be significantly out of keeping with the local prevailing pattern of development. I recognise that ample space would be retained between the

front and side elevations of the property and the corresponding parallel boundaries of the site. However, I share the Council's view that the existing position of the building purposefully maintains the spatial characteristics of the area. This would be seriously impacted by the encroachment of the building so close to the public domain where its two-storey scale would appear overly prominent and intrusive within the street scene. Its uncharacteristic impact would be openly seen when approaching the site in both directions along Carlton Crescent and from Barbara Close.

9. The appellant has drawn my attention to many other properties in the area. Some have been modified beyond their original form. I have already found that, in principle, a change to the appearance of the property is not, by itself, harmful. I have noted that the Council has accepted some properties being extended at two-storey close up to their side boundaries, including at the neighbouring No 10 Carlton Crescent. However, I saw no examples that compared directly with the circumstances at No 8 and the specific context of the appeal site.

Other Matters

10. The appellant has argued that the Council placed undue reliance upon an objection from a nearby resident that he alleges included factually incorrect information. However, there is no substantive evidence to support this assertion. Neither is there any evidence that the Council improperly considered the application in any other way. Moreover, my decision has been based squarely on the planning merits of the case.

Conclusion

11. For the reasons given, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. As such, it would conflict with the broad design principles of LP Saved Policies Policy GEN1, part (i) of which requires development to be in keeping with local character by virtue of, amongst other things, prominence and siting. For this same reason there would also be conflict with criterion a) of HLPSS Policy NBE9 – *Design* and criterion 1 of Policy 10 – *General Design Management Policy* of the Fleet Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2032. Accordingly, and having regard to all other matters raised, including support for the proposal offered by a neighbour opposite the appeal site, the appeal is dismissed.

John D Allan

INSPECTOR