
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 July 2020

by Robin Buchanan BA (Hons), MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 25 November 2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/20/3252811

7 Stonegate, Camberley GU15 1PD

- 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 Katie Saise against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/2173/FFU, dated 12 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 26 February 2020.
 - The development proposed is described as a double storey side and front extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a double storey side extension and front extension at 7 Stonegate, Camberley GU15 1PD in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 19/2173/FFU, dated 12 November 2019, subject to the conditions set out in the attached schedule.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. Stonegate is a short road containing mainly two storey detached houses of varied design and appearance in a residential area of Camberley. The appeal site (No 7) contains a detached two storey house. On one side is a house at No 9 Stonegate and on the other side is a bungalow at No 5 Stonegate, which is linked to No 7 by flat roofed garages. The 'open plan' front gardens and arrangement of dwellings set back from the road give a spacious feel to development in Stonegate and on the appeal site side of Stonegate the dwellings are backed by a belt of tall, mature pine trees. These characteristics are noticeable in public views and are locally distinctive in the immediate area.
4. The appeal proposal would enlarge No 7 with a two storey side extension and a two storey front extension on the part of the house that is closest to No 5. A contemporary design would include some large glazed windows with grey frames, white rendered walls and stained timber cladding. The front elevation of the house would be altered to match the contemporary external materials in the new extensions.
5. Most of the proposed extensions would incorporate the existing footprint and ground floor of the house and garages. Accordingly, there would be no material change to layout, scale or massing of the house in this regard. Furthermore, on

the evidence before me, the appeal proposal would not therefore require foundation or building works any closer to the pine trees in the back garden of No 7 than the existing house, nor would the extensions be closer to these trees than the existing house.

6. The first floor of the side extension would reduce the gap between No 7 and No 5 but would not alter the existing transition in height from two storey to single storey built form. Furthermore, this gap is reasonably large and the extension would be a relatively narrow addition to the width of the house. As a result, the reduction in space, and as this would bring the point of transition in height closer together, would not be significant and there would still be an appreciable degree of separation and openness between these two dwellings without any jarring effect in the streetscene.
7. The first floor of the proposed front extension would project a reasonably long way forward and have significant scale and massing. However, the ridge would be slightly lower than the main ridge of the house and so appear subservient. Furthermore, No 7 is sited considerably further back from the road than the general building line in Stonegate, including in relation to No 5 and No 9. The two storey part of this extension would therefore occupy a relatively small part of the space at the front of No 7 and not unduly reduce openness or appear cramped. In addition, in one direction it would be seen in the context of the similar two storey height side elevation of No 9 thus would not be unduly prominent.
8. In the other direction it would be viewed towards the lower height bungalow at No 5. However, the single storey garages already screen about a third of the side elevation of the bungalow. In addition, the first floor part of the front extension would visually overlap with only a small part of the bungalow roof, at the rear, because it is sited much further forward and closer to the road than No 7. Accordingly, it would not have any unacceptable overbearing relationship on the majority (about two thirds) of the bungalow. The front extension would not therefore dominate the bungalow or unduly detract from its separate identity, which would remain a distinct presence in the streetscene.
9. I accept that the appeal proposal would change the existing visual and spatial relationship between the dwellings at No 5, No 7 and No 9, but for the reasons explained above this would be only to a limited extent and not incongruous. For the same reasons there would also be no appreciable effect on views of the pine trees. I do not consider that the development would be out of keeping in this local context.
10. Consequently, the proposed development would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would accord with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy & Development Management Policies, February 2012. This policy includes that development should enhance local character, having particular regard to scale, materials, massing and bulk, and protect trees worthy of retention. It would also accord with the Council's supplementary planning documents (SPD) and with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) paragraphs 124, 127(a), (b), (c) and (d) which include that development should ensure high quality buildings and places, add to the quality of an area, be visually attractive, sympathetic to local character while not preventing appropriate innovation and maintain a strong sense of place.

Other Matters

11. The occupier of No 5 did not object to the proposed development but refers to a commitment by the appellant to reinstate the garage side wall, once it is separated from the garages at No 7. This is a private matter between the respective parties.
12. The occupier of No 9 refers to loss of privacy due to the position of a large side window in No 9 which would face towards a large side window in the proposed front extension. I note that the Council did not object for reason of effect on the privacy of the occupiers of No 9. In this regard, at ground floor the window would be for a lobby with a void above at first floor level. Neither space is a habitable room so there would therefore be no harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 7 due to any view from No 9. It is likely that activity in a lobby, and views towards No 9, would be intermittent and of limited duration so would not cause harm to the living conditions of the occupiers of No 9. There would be no view from the void. These windows would anyway be a reasonable distance apart and have a moderating effect on any actual or perceived overlooking.
13. The appellant's appeal statement of case refers to a planning application¹ submitted to the Council since the appeal was lodged for a 'reduced' scheme, including an arboricultural report. However, no details of this application or any decision by the Council are before me in evidence. I have in any event determined this appeal on its planning merits.

Conditions

14. I have considered the conditions suggested by the parties and where necessary amended the wording in the interests of clarity and in the light of the advice and tests in Framework paragraph 55 and in the Planning Practice Guidance.² I agree with the Council that in addition to the standard time limit condition, a condition is necessary to specify the approved plans to ensure certainty.
15. However, I do not agree that it is reasonable or necessary to impose a 'materials' condition, including to require materials to match the existing appearance of the house. The approved plans and the planning application form contain details of external materials commensurate with the intended contemporary design, which the Council did not object to. The appellant has suggested a condition for details of tree protection measures during construction, but given my findings in the main issue above such a condition would not be reasonable or necessary.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given, the appeal succeeds.

Robin Buchanan

INSPECTOR

¹ Council's reference 20/0283/FFU.

² Paragraph: 003 Reference ID: 21a-003-20190723.

Schedule of Conditions

- 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
- 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans:
 - AD4322 Rev A Existing plans, elevations & location plan – Sheet 1
 - AD4322 Rev B Proposed plans, elevations & site plan – Sheet 2