



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2020

by Lynne Evans BA MA MRTPI MRICS

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23/12/2020

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/20/3258587

35 Elsenwood Crescent, Camberley GU15 2BA

- 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 Edwin Griffiths against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref: 20/0454/FFU dated 27 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 23 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is two storey side, first floor front extension with a single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the existing dwelling and on the local area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property is a detached dwelling, which has previously been extended, within a predominantly residential area, on the west side of Elsenwood Crescent. The surrounding properties date from a similar period and many have been the subject of a number of alterations and extensions, including to the front and to the side. With a small number of exceptions, the sense of spaciousness between dwellings is generally maintained, through a combination of single storey development, with both garages and extensions, as well as open gaps close to plot boundaries. The street scene has a verdant appearance.
4. The appeal property and Elsenwood Crescent lie within the Hedged Estates Character Area, as set out under the Council's Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Paragraphs 5.22 and 5.23 of the SPD describe these areas as typically small mid to late 20th century infill estates with a very green character, comprising generous plots accommodating detached dwellings with enclosure of the street scene with hedges and street trees. One of the pressures identified by the Council on the Character Area is the reduction of gaps as a result of extensions and infilling.
5. The proposal would add a two storey side extension, wrapping round to a first floor extension at the front and single storey extension at the rear, together

with other alterations including the creation of a new front porch. Whilst I agree with the Appellant that the footprint would not be greatly increased, the proposal would result in a substantial addition in the bulk and massing of the property. In particular, the width and depth of the proposed gable fronted, first floor front projection would result in a very large and dominant feature that would be out of proportion and scale with the rest of the dwelling. The property would extend over two storeys almost the full width of the plot, with very marginal spacing on either side. Notwithstanding the use of a hipped roof over the extension, I consider that the property as proposed to be extended would appear cramped and an overdevelopment of the plot, particularly in relation to its width.

6. I also consider that the property as extended, and particularly the front first floor extension would result in the property being over prominent and visually intrusive in the street scene. Whilst front gables are a feature of the estate and street scene, the overall size and depth of the first floor extension proposed would result in it becoming an over dominant feature, particularly when approaching from the south.
7. I do not agree with the Council that the proposal would, to use its wording, terminate views of the green backdrop. However, the overall spread of two storey development across almost the whole width of the plot would appear as an overdevelopment of the site and out of character with the surrounding development.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the existing property and of the local area. This would conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework, and in particular Section 12, Policy DM9 of the Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012 and principles 7.8 and 10.1 of the Residential Design Guide SPD (2017), as well as the Guiding Principles – Hedged Estates of the SPD, with particular reference to Principles HE1, HE2 and HE3, all of which seek for new development to be of high quality and to respect the local context.
9. The Appellant has drawn my attention to other extensions that have been permitted and constructed in close vicinity along Elsenwood Crescent. Each proposal must be considered on its individual merits, but I have nonetheless taken these other examples into account. However, they do not persuade me that the proposal before me should be permitted, given the harm I have concluded.

Other Considerations

10. I agree with the Appellant that the proposal would not materially harm the living conditions of the surrounding neighbours. The Council also raised no objection in this regard.
11. I have sympathy with the family related reasons for seeking the proposed extensions to the property. However, these benefits do not outweigh the harm I have concluded. I have noted the concerns raised by the Appellants regarding the manner in which the application was progressed, but these matters need to be directed to the Council; my decision is based solely on the planning merits of the proposal.

Conclusion

12. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, including in representations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

L J Evans

INSPECTOR