



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 December 2020

by Rory MacLeod BA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 January 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/20/3258841

25 Walden Cottages, Westwood Lane, Normandy, Guildford GU3 2JB

- 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 Hendrik van der Spuy against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 20/P/00872, dated 27 May 2020, was refused by notice dated 7 July 2020.
 - The development proposed is demolition of existing single storey extension to construct new attached dwelling, with associated access; alterations to donor house, including provision of new car parking spaces.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are (a) the effect of the proposal's scale and design on the character and appearance of the area and (b) the proposal's impact on the integrity of a Special Protection Area.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal relates to a two storey semi-detached house in a road characterised by similar pairs of semi-detached houses with gable end roofs. There is some informality and variation in the layout of the houses due to bends in the road and the terminus of the cul-de-sac. But the locality retains a spacious character, a coherent rhythm of building blocks and spaces and a uniformity of appearance, notwithstanding the construction of single and two storey extensions to some dwellings.
4. The proposal would result in a terrace of three houses with the new dwelling having a noticeably greater width than the retained house. Its mass would be extenuated by the stepping forward of the building line, provision of a large front facing gable and a two storey rear projection. Whilst there would be satisfactory separation to the adjacent dwelling, 24 Walden Cottage, to not result in a cramped appearance, the proposal would nonetheless be an overly dominant and incongruous development.
5. The proposal would be detrimental to the character of the area and appearance of the street scene. It would thereby conflict with Policy D1 of the Guildford

Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019) (LPSS) and with Saved Policy G5 of the Guildford Local Plan (2003) (GLP) which require new development to achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character including in relation to scale and roof treatments. It would also conflict with Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) which requires proposals to be sympathetic to local character including the built environment.

6. The appellant points to the front gable to a two storey side extension to no.24, but this is an isolated case and the gable is not as high or as wide as that proposed. Reference is also made to front gables to dwellings at the entrance to the cul-de-sac. These relate to differently designed dwellings with hipped side roofs that form angled book ends as a gateway to an estate dominated by dwellings like the appeal site. The gables are modestly proportioned and do not provide justification for the proposal. The appellant claims the stepping forward and front gable would help to define the transition and provide a non-flush junction between materials, which is difficult to achieve on extensions. There are alternative ways to effect a satisfactory transition without such a dominating development. The appellant also refers to a lesser separation following side extensions between nos. 20 and 21 Walden Cottages, but the extensions here by contrast are narrower and subservient in appearance.

Special Protection Area

7. The site is within the 400m to 5km buffer zone of the Thames Valley Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). Policy P5 of the LPSS states within this zone avoidance and mitigation measures should be delivered to safeguard the integrity of the SPA. Whilst the Council appears to be open to the making of contributions to secure mitigation, there is insufficient information before me to conduct an Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the Habitat Regulations (2017) in relation to the reasonableness of this approach. Neither is there a completed legal agreement before me to enable such contributions to be secured. As I have found the proposal to be unacceptable in other respects, I have not explored this issue further. As such, the proposal would be contrary to Policy P5 of the LPSS, with Saved Policy NE4 of the GLP and with Saved Policy NRM6 of the South East Plan (2009) all of which seek to protect habitats within and the ecological integrity of the SPA.

Other matters

8. The proposal would have the benefit of contributing an additional dwelling to meet the general housing need. However, the Council confirms that it is able to demonstrate a five year housing land supply with an appropriate buffer. The tilted balance at Paragraph 11(d) of the Framework is not engaged. The benefit of a single dwelling would not outweigh the harm arising to the character and appearance of the area through the proposal's scale and design.

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given and having regard to all other matters raised the appeal should be dismissed.

Rory MacLeod

INSPECTOR