



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 August 2021

by G D Jones BSc(Hons) DipTP DMS MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 22 September 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/W/21/3272665

3 Parr Close, Leatherhead KT22 7HD

- 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 Jiebin Zong against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref MO/2020/1515/PLA, dated 27 August 2020, was refused by notice dated 15 October 2020.
 - The development proposed is a new dwelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. The appeal was made before the publication of the current version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). Both main parties were given opportunity to adjust their evidence in light of the new Framework. I have had regard to any subsequent submissions when making my decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site forms part of the side garden of 3 Parr Close, a semi-detached house. Parr Close is a residential cul-de-sac that is largely characterised by similar pairs of semi-detached houses and by semi-detached bungalows. These buildings are fairly evenly spaced and set back from the pavement thereby giving the street scene a pleasant coherent and fairly spacious quality.
5. The evidence refers to a previous appeal decision for a new dwelling at No 3 that was dismissed last year (the previous appeal)¹. Although the current appeal proposals are for a smaller house that would not project as far from the side elevation of No 3, many of the issues identified by the previous appeal Inspector apply to the current appeal scheme.
6. Like the previous appeal scheme, the current proposal would result in the erection of a dwelling to the side of No 3 thus forming a short terrace. The current scheme would complement the principal lines and proportions of the

¹ Ref APP/C3620/W/19/3238829

two houses that form the pair and, in that sense, would be very much more in keeping with the host building than the previous scheme would have been. Nonetheless, the formation of a terrace would in itself be at odds with the pleasant nearby pattern of development.

7. As the previous Inspector noted, *Parr Close is part of a larger estate where terraced properties are present, albeit utilising a particular terraced house type designed and positioned within the street in a comprehensive way.* In contrast to those existing terraces, the proposed development would result in an ad hoc terrace unlike others in the estate. While the proposed development would result in a more balanced terrace than the previous scheme, due to its relative form and size the extended building would sit discordantly with the rhythm of semi-detached properties within Parr Close.
8. Although the proposed dwelling would not project as far from the side elevation of No 3 as the previously proposed development would have done, it would nonetheless represent a significant addition to the host building and to the wider street scene. Like the previous scheme, it would also project beyond the line of the existing rear garage to No 3 and the two-storey element of No 1. Notwithstanding the reduced scale of development compared to the previous appeal and that a gap of nearly 2m would be retained to the back of the pavement, this projection would jar visually with the ordered pattern of development in Parr Close and undermine the sense of spaciousness. These effects would be particularly pronounced given the site's fairly prominent corner location.
9. The site stands on lower ground than that at the entrance to Parr Close from Boleyn Walk thereby reducing the effects outlined above when viewed from the north. Nonetheless, these effects would still be evident and would become more acute in closer views as the land progressively falls south and west wards along Parr Close.
10. The proposed development, therefore, would have a significantly harmful effect on the character and appearance of the area contrary to Policy CS 14 (Townscape, Urban Design and the Historic Environment) of the Mole Valley Core Strategy, October 2009, and Policies ENV22 (General Development Control Criteria), ENV23 (Respect for Setting) and ENV24 (Density of Development and the Space about Buildings) of the Mole Valley Local Plan, October 2000, as well as with the Framework in this regard.

Other Matters

11. The evidence indicates that the Council cannot currently demonstrate a Framework compliant supply of deliverable housing land. Accordingly, unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies of the Framework taken as a whole, planning permission should be granted for the appeal development.
12. Parts of the role of sustainable development as defined by the Framework would be achieved, for instance through the delivery of a new home attached to an existing building, within an established residential area close to services and facilities. The scheme would also make a contribution to the economic dimension of sustainable development, for instance during the construction phase as well as through additional spending associated with the residents of the house. The proposals are also supported by some policies of the

development plan in these respects, including Core Strategy Policies CS 1, CS 2 and CS 3.

13. Nonetheless, good design is a key aspect of sustainable development as recognised by the Framework. Accordingly, given my findings outlined above concerning the harm to the character and appearance of the area, the proposal would fail to fully meet the environmental dimension of the Framework. On this basis the harm arising would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the positive aspects of the proposal, bearing in mind the relatively modest contribution offered by a single house to meeting housing need and the commensurately modest associated benefits. Consequently, the appeal scheme would not be sustainable development in the terms of the Framework such that there is not a presumption in its favour.
14. In making my decision I have taken into account the other matters raised by interested parties. They have not, however, altered my overall decision. I also note the other development referred to in the evidence, including planning permissions for nine houses at Beech Tree Close and for an extension at 22 Tudor Close. However, as I am not familiar with all of the circumstances of those cases and bearing in mind that appeals must be determined on their individual merits, they have not altered my overall decision.

Conclusion

15. While according with some of its policies, the proposal would conflict with the development plan taken as a whole. Furthermore, there are no material considerations that have led me to conclude that the decision should be made other than in accordance with the development plan. Therefore, for the reasons given, the appeal should be dismissed.

G D Jones

INSPECTOR