
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2021

by H Lock BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16 DECEMBER 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/21/3277827

27 Crossways, Three Bridges, CRAWLEY, RH10 1QT

- 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 Miss Angela Bradley against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. CR/2021/0244/FUL, dated 5 April 2021, was refused by notice dated 27 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is part 2 storey and part single storey side extension and single storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. Since the appeal was lodged a revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) has been published. However, as the policies of most relevance to this proposal have not changed fundamentally it has not been necessary to seek further comments from the parties.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the appeal property and the street scene.

Reasons

4. The appeal property is an end-terrace house prominently located next to a footway. This part of Crossways has an open and spacious character, primarily as a result of deep grass verges that separate dwellings from the road.
5. The appeal dwelling has a single-storey outbuilding that forms part of the side wall with the footway. As such, the two-storey element is set away from the boundary, and this gap contributes to the general sense of space in the street scene. Although there are dwellings in the area that appear to have side extensions, the general pattern of development is of more generous gaps to boundaries than proposed in this case.
6. Amongst other criteria, Policy CH2 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (LP) requires development proposals to respond to and reinforce locally distinctive patterns of development, and LP Policy CH3 requires all proposals to

be of high quality in terms of their urban, landscape and architectural design and to relate sympathetically to their surroundings in terms including scale, height, massing, and details. The policy requires compliance with supplementary planning guidance produced by the council.

7. The Council's 'Urban Design' Supplementary Planning Document 2016 generally seeks a 2-metre setback between a side extension and an adjacent property or site boundary, but it also recognises that this may not be appropriate in all cases. The submitted floor plan indicates that a modest gap of 900mm would be retained at first-floor level between the extension and the outer edge of the parapet wall.
8. This proposal follows an appeal dismissal¹ for a two-storey extension built up to the side boundary, with the same recess to Crossways Close as now proposed. Notwithstanding the proposed first-floor inset from the boundary, the proposed extension would project the building further forwards than the existing store, and up to the back edge of the footway of Crossways, albeit at single storey. The Council's report indicates that the parapet wall would have a height of 3.5m, and this would be over 6.5m deep next to the footway. The modest inset from the boundary at first-floor level would not resolve the harm identified by the previous Inspector, of an extension that would loom large at this point when seen from the public domain, out of step with any other building's position in the immediate area. In so doing, it would diminish the spacious nature of the street scene.
9. The visual intrusion of the proposal would be exacerbated by the prominent siting of the dwelling closer to the footway than 25 and 29 Crossways, and by the materially greater impact than the modest store which it would replace. Moreover, this proposal introduces design features that would be out of keeping with the main house and the terrace of which it forms part, and which did not arise with the previous scheme; namely, the mono-pitched parapet roof to the single-storey side and rear extension. Although the appellant considers the terrace to be of no great architectural merit, this aspect of the proposal would not be sympathetic to its form.
10. The appellant considers that the Council's delegated report contradicts the reason for refusal, as it states that the proposal is acceptable and would comply with Local Plan policies. However, I find no conflict on this point as that assessment appears to relate only to the impact on neighbouring residents, amenity space and parking.
11. I am mindful of other buildings in the vicinity that are sited close to the adjacent footway, but these appear to be less prominently sited, or in less spacious parts of the residential estate, or set further back from the highway at first-floor level than proposed in this case. Whilst the appellant has provided photographs of some unidentified examples, the relevant planning permissions have not been supplied, and therefore it is unclear if these additions were assessed against the same planning policies which are now in place.
12. I appreciate the aim of the extension is partly to address insulation, thermal efficiency and energy costs at the property, but in the form proposed this would be at the expense of the local built environment.

¹ Ref. D/4001584 - demolition of existing single-storey brick store building and construction of new 2-storey side extension - dismissed 26 February 2021

13. I therefore conclude that, as a result of its size, design and proximity to the adjacent footway, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the appeal property and the street scene, in conflict with the design aims of LP Policies CH2 and CH3, and the Framework, which seeks to create developments that are visually attractive as a result of good architecture and are sympathetic to local character, including the surrounding built environment.

Other Matters

14. The second reason for refusal relates to a difference in ridge height of the proposed extension as shown on the front, rear and side elevations. Although the appellant advises that this is an error that has been corrected on the current set of drawings, this difference appears to be shown on drawing no. CR-04 that forms part of this appeal. Whilst I have found the proposal to be unacceptable for other reasons, a lack of clarity on the height of the resultant extension, and other amendments suggested by the appellant, could not have been resolved as part of this appeal.
15. The appellant has raised issues about the Council's pre-application processes, but such matters cannot be explored in a Section 78 planning appeal. The appeal must be considered on its planning merits, and as such this argument has little weight in this decision.

Conclusion

16. For the above reasons, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Lock

INSPECTOR