



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: 17th December 2021

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3820/D/21/3277541

95 Three Bridges Road, Three Bridges, Crawley, RH10 1JR

- 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 Harbir Padda against the decision of Crawley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. CR/2020/0809/FUL, dated 7 December 2020, was refused by notice dated 13 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is proposed two storey and single storey rear extension, first floor side extension over existing, conversion of garage with front bay window, accommodation at second floor with high level rooflights in the front and side (amended description).
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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 Issues

3. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on (1) the character and appearance of the appeal property and the street scene; and (2) the living conditions of occupants of 93 Three Bridges Road, with particular reference to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The appeal property is a detached two-storey house set back from Three Bridges Road behind a reasonably deep front garden with roadside planting. The street scene is mixed in terms of the design, scale and siting of buildings, and the appeal property sits between a modern two-storey house and a single-storey dwelling (No.93) set further back from the road than No.95. Despite the screen planting at the appeal site, there are clear views of the dwelling across the open front garden of No.93 to the west, and to a lesser extent across the driveway and access road to the east.

5. I find no objection in principle to an increase in the width of the roof ridge of the dwelling, due to other examples of similar length ridge lines in the locality. However, the resultant width of the building at first floor level would create an unduly dominant dwelling on the site relative to its side boundaries. Pedestrian width gaps would be retained to either side, but this would be at odds with the more spacious gaps advocated in the Council's 'Urban Design' Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Although gaps to boundaries and between buildings vary in the street scene, the immediate context in which the appeal property is viewed appears reasonably spacious, and the loss of the space above the existing garage would undermine the more open character at this point.
6. The depth of the rear extension would be quite significant compared to the original house, and its impact would be exacerbated by the extra bulk of the roof. Although the effect would be reduced by the insets from either side wall at first-floor level, the cumulative impact of additions to the property would markedly alter its scale and bulk. This would be to a degree that would detract from its character and appearance. Whilst I note the appellant's view that the siting within the street scene is inconspicuous, I consider that the resultant size of the building would be apparent from outside of the site in views across neighbouring front gardens and access roads. However, there is no objection to the proposed front porch.
7. I appreciate that the proposal would make more efficient use of land in a sustainable and accessible location, and that its purpose is to create an adaptable layout more suitable for modern family living and home working. The aim is also to improve the overall energy efficiency of the property. However, these benefits would not outweigh the harm identified to the local built environment.
8. I therefore conclude that as a result of the size, scale and massing, the proposal would detract from the character and appearance of the dwelling and the street scene, contrary to the design aims of Policy CH3 of the Crawley Borough Local Plan 2015 – 2030 (LP), which requires development proposals to be of high quality in terms including their urban and architectural design and to relate sympathetically to their surroundings in terms such as scale, height, massing, layout, and details. Policy CH3 also requires compliance with any relevant supplementary planning guidance, and the proposal would conflict with that in the Urban Design SPD, regarding spacing to boundaries and the relationship of extensions to the parent dwelling's character and style and that of the neighbourhood.

Living Conditions

9. The appeal property is sited forward of No.93, with the original rear wall of No.95 almost in line with the front of the neighbouring dwelling. There is a reasonable gap between the two buildings, with pedestrian access between No.95 and the boundary, and the access driveway of No. 93 beyond. There are side-facing windows of No.93 directed towards the shared boundary.
10. Notwithstanding the gap between buildings, and the proposed inset position of the first-floor rear extension, it would create an unduly dominant and overbearing feature in the outlook from No.93. This would be as a result of the proposed height, depth, and mass of the extension, and the relative position of buildings. Given the siting of No.95 forward of No.93, the addition would create

a lengthy stretch of two-storey wall and roof above that would offer little relief in the outlook from the side of the single-storey dwelling.

11. I am mindful that the side windows of No.93 overlook its own driveway, and that part of the rear garden is used for parking, but that does not offset the more permanent effects of a two-storey extension wall. The mitigation offered by the proposed element of single-storey flat-roof closest to the boundary would be limited in its effect.
12. I therefore conclude that the proposed rear extension would dominate the outlook from 93 Three Bridges Road to an extent that the living conditions of occupants would be harmed. This would be contrary to the aims of LP Policy CH3 c), for development proposals to provide or retain a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings, and to not cause unreasonable harm to the amenity of the surrounding area by terms including dominance or overshadowing. This is reinforced by guidance in the SPD, and the requirement set out in the Framework, to create places with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

Other Matters

13. A number of objections made by third parties appear to relate to earlier proposals rather than the revised plans. However, concerns relating to the potential effect on a yew hedge is a private matter between the parties. Other issues raised, including the occupancy of the building, is not material to the determination of the proposal.

Conclusion

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

H Lock

INSPECTOR