



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 January 2022

by R J Redford MTCP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21st February 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/21/3277690

103 Ashurst Road, Tadworth KT20 5EY

- 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 Boon Property Services Limited against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 19/02385/F, dated 22 November 2019, was refused by notice dated 6 May 2021.
 - The development proposed is described as the 'demolition of existing bungalow and double garage and replacement with a two and a half storey building comprising 2 no. one bed flats and 4 no. two bed flats with associated car parking and amenity space.'
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

2. Since the Council took its decision and the appeal was made, the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was revised in July 2021. The sections pertinent to this appeal have not materially altered and I will therefore reference the revised version going forward.
3. Several amendments were made to the proposed development during the planning process. I have had regard to the drawings the Council have referenced in their decision notice and have determined the appeal accordingly.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in this appeal is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. Ashurst Road forms part of a wider suburban residential area. The appeal site is located at the bottom of the slope of Ashurst Road before it rises again to meet Shelveys Way and Epsom Lane North, beyond which the character of the area changes to include commercial uses. To the north of the appeal site there is a new build development, Tadorne Place, with Nos 1-4 in a two-storey building adjacent to the appeal site and Nos 6-10 in a three-storey building signifying the divide between the two character areas. To the south of the appeal site are 3 bungalows and the rest of Ashurst Road predominantly consists of two-storey semi-detached dwellings. Most properties are set back behind semi-enclosed gardens and parking areas along a similar building line.

6. Ashurst Road is characterised by the dip in which the appeal site sits and the ridgeline of the properties along its length stepping down to reflect this. This along with the strong building line creates a uniformity in appearance which is not unique to Ashurst Road but is characteristic of the wider suburban area and follows the undulating topography.
7. The proposed development would replace the existing bungalow and garage with a building providing 3 floors of accommodation including the roof space. The building would be designed to include multiple gables and dormers to maximise light and space to the roof accommodation, thus when viewed from the front, 3 floors would be clear. It would be located closer to the road and the parking area of Tadorne Place than the existing bungalow.
8. The width, depth, and footprint of the proposed building would not only reflect that of the existing bungalow but also of the buildings on either side. Its ridgeline would be at a similar level to 1-4 Tadorne Place, and it would use the fall of the land to increase its height, thereby allowing for the inclusion of the third floor of accommodation in the roof.
9. However, the additional bulk created by the extra height would be at odds with the surrounding buildings, overwhelming them. The space between the proposed building and Tadorne Place would create a disparity between the two developments rather than unifying them. The flattening of the curve in the ridgeline along Ashurst Road would also be out of character and at odds with the rest of the buildings along its length. This would be further exacerbated by the proposed building's position forward of the existing building line, which would be at odds with the uniformity of its surroundings. Consequently, the poor relationship between the proposed development and its surroundings in terms of scale, bulk, ridgeline and building line would be out of character with the street scene of Ashurst Road and the wider area.
10. The proposed design would reflect the horizontal form of the surrounding buildings and the embankment to the rear and would include a forward-facing gable. However, most forward-facing gables along Ashurst Road are subservient to the main form of the host building and appear to be 2 storeys in height, excepting those on 6-10 Tadorne Place. The proposal would also include roof dormers and on visiting the site it was not evident that these formed part of the existing character of the surrounding area. It is therefore considered that these design features would not mediate the harm found.
11. The appellant asserts that the overwhelming majority of properties are 2-3 storeys in height. This has not been supported by evidence. On visiting the appeal site and locality, most properties appear as 2 storeys in height except for 6-10 Tadorne Place, which is separated from the appeal site and is adjacent to commercial uses as well as residential, and so cannot be considered a direct comparison.
12. The appellant also asserts that the adjacent bungalow will be developed in the future, without providing any evidence to this effect. This, therefore, has no weight in my considerations.
13. The appellant has referred to several further policies from the Reigate and Banstead Core Strategy 2014 (Core Strategy), Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 (DMP), various paragraphs from the Framework and the National Design Guide, including those relating to

sustainable development. Paragraph 9 of the Framework confirms that decisions and policy should guide development towards sustainable solutions, but in doing so should take local circumstance into account, in order to reflect the character, need and opportunities. In this regard the sustainability of the proposal does not mediate the harm found.

14. Interested parties have raised concerns including drainage, parking, and highway safety. However, as I am dismissing the appeal for other reasons, I have not pursued these matters further.
15. I conclude that the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore be contrary to Core Strategy Policy CS1, and DMP Policies DES1 and DES2, paragraphs 9 and 130 of the Framework, and the Local Distinctiveness Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance, in so far as they seek to ensure that new development respects surrounding character and appearance.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole along with all other relevant material considerations including the approach in the Framework, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

RJ Redford

INSPECTOR