



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 31 May 2022 by A Humphries BSc (Hons) MSc

Decision by Martin Seaton BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 21 July 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/22/3297158

Newlynds, Brackendene, Ash, Surrey, GU12 6BN

- 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 Andrew Gibson against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/P/02710, dated 30 December 2021, was refused by notice dated 16 March 2022.
 - The development proposed is a new double garage including workshop/store and bin storage on existing driveway. To occupy approximately half the current drive/parking area. Construction to be of concrete block rendered, pebble dashed and painted. To match finish and colour of the main house. Roof to be pitched and tiled with clay tiles selected to match existing house roof. Rainwater recovery tank to be installed to store water for use in the garden collected from new roof. External areas to retain gravel - no additional hard paving/paving blocks to be added.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Appeal Procedure

2. The site visit was undertaken by an Appeal Planning Officer whose recommendation is set out below and to which the Inspector has had regard before deciding the appeal.

Preliminary Matters

3. There is a degree of variation between the site address given on the application form, the appeal form and the Council's decision notice. Although I am satisfied that they are all seeking to identify the same site, I see no reason to deviate from the above site address as taken from the application form.
4. There is also a degree of variation between the description of development on the application form and that utilised by the Council. Whilst I am satisfied that both descriptions are seeking to describe the proposed development, I have seen no agreement to a revised description of development. Accordingly, the above description of development is taken from the application form, which is replicated on the appeal form.

Main Issue

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

Reasons for the Recommendation

6. Brackendene is an unadopted and narrow unmade road lined with dwellings of a variety of architectural styles. Whilst the building lines vary, the dwellings are generously setback from the road, separated by front lawns and driveways. Collectively, this creates an informal character to the street scene and, notwithstanding the prominence of hedges and trees along Brackendene, there is a prevailing sense of spaciousness.
7. Contributing to the distinctive local character, the host dwelling is substantially setback with a large front garden and boundary hedge fronting Brackendene. Close to the boundary with the road, the proposed development would be sited significantly forward of the host dwelling. The proposed development would also extend clearly beyond the main building lines of neighbouring dwellings and marginally beyond two adjacent outbuildings, which are modest in size in comparison to the proposed development. The proposed development would therefore appear as a departure from the prevailing character of the area and would be incongruous in this regard. Owing to the scale of the garage, together with the encroachment significantly beyond the main building lines, the proposed development would unacceptably erode the spatial character of Brackendene and interrupt the relationship between dwellings and adjoining open spaces.
8. I recognise that the proposed development would use materials to match the appearance of the host dwelling and the roof design would reflect other roofs observed on Brackendene. I have also had regard to the appellant's stated desire to retain the hedge on the front boundary as a means of providing a degree of screening and to curtail views of the development.
9. Despite this, there is no evidence before me to indicate that the hedge would be maintained in its current size and form, or a suggested means of securing such an outcome. In any event, whilst in the existing state observed during the site visit, the front boundary hedge of the host dwelling and a tree beyond the curtilage of the property would provide a degree of screening of the proposed development, it would nevertheless be a prominent feature from either direction along Brackendene due to its scale. The proposed development would therefore appear as a visually intrusive feature.
10. The Council's delegated report refers to harm from the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host dwelling in terms of the legibility of the principal elevation. However, the Council's grounds for refusal, as set out in the decision notice, refers solely to the character and appearance of the area. Nevertheless, I observed that the host dwelling would be seen in the context of the neighbouring dwellings, including 87 Guildford Road, and these do not obscure the principal elevation of the host dwelling. However, notwithstanding the large scale of the host dwelling, the proposed development would interrupt and detract from its legibility due to the scale and visual prominence from Brackendene. I am therefore in agreement with the Council's view regarding the impact on the host dwelling.
11. The appellant has brought to my attention the nearby 'Wildflower Meadow' development and a strategic location for development for approximately 1,750 homes. Whilst I recognise that these would contribute to the urban character of the area beyond Brackendene, these are of a considerably different scale and context to the proposed development. These cited examples therefore do not

represent the same circumstances nor could be regarded as directly comparable to the character and appearance of Brackendene and thus the specific context of the proposed development.

12. For the reasons above, the proposed development would harm the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development would be contrary to Policy D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategies and Sites (2019) and saved Policy G5 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003). Collectively, these policies seek high quality design that reflect the distinctive local character and patterns of development, together with setting out design requirements to protect and enhance the built environment. Overall, the proposed development would also not accord with the Council's Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Residential Extensions and Alterations (2018), which seeks to avoid garages in highly prominent locations in front of the building line.

Other Matters

13. The appellant has drawn my attention to the historical context of the host dwelling, including an historical 'outbuilding' in the proximate location of the proposed development and changes to views as a result of developments. However, the host dwelling is not a designated heritage asset or set within one, and the historical context of the host dwelling is not a decisive factor in the decision-making for this appeal. Consideration is given to the proposed development within the context of the existing prevailing character and appearance of the area, but with no remnants of the historical 'outbuilding' observed during the site visit, I do not find this to be a factor of any significance in assessing the constituent parts of the existing character and appearance of the area.
14. I acknowledge that the proposed development would enable a shed within the curtilage of the host dwelling to be demolished and would also screen an adjacent garage from views within the curtilage of the host dwelling. Whilst the shed and adjacent garage are visible from Brackendene, owing to their modest size, I am not persuaded that these detract from the character and appearance of the area. Furthermore, the adjacent garage would also remain visible to users of Brackendene when approaching from Guildford Road.

Conclusion and Recommendation

15. I sympathise with the appellant's desire for secure parking and storage facilities, together with the constraints arising from the position of the host dwelling within the curtilage of the property. However, this does not outweigh the harm which I have identified to the character and appearance of the area. The proposed development therefore conflicts with the development plan taken as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the National Planning Policy Framework, that outweigh this conflict.
16. For the reasons given above and having had regard to all other matters raised, I recommend that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Humphries

APPEAL PLANNING OFFICER

Inspector's Decision

17. I have considered all the submitted evidence and the Appeal Planning Officer's report and on that basis the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Seaton

INSPECTOR