



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 July 2022

by A Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 12th August 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/W/22/3293071

22 Waverley Drive, Camberley GU15 2DL

- 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 S Davey against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/0847/FFU, dated 27 July 2021, was refused by notice dated 23 September 2021.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as 'single storey front and rear extension and conversion of existing dwelling to create 2 x one bed flats and 3 x two bed flats. Erection of new building to form 4 x two bed flats. Associated parking and landscaping'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Notwithstanding the description of development set out above, which is taken from the application form, it is clear from the plans and accompanying details that the development comprises the erection of 3 storey front extension, two storey side/rear extension and single storey side/rear extension with associated roof alterations to facilitate converting the dwelling into 1 x one bed flat, 5 x two bed flats and 1 x three bed flat, associated parking and landscaping. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and so shall I.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the surrounding area, including on trees; and
 - whether a satisfactory standard of accommodation would be provided for future occupiers, with particular regard to outlook from Flat 7.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The site comprises a large garden plot occupied by a two-storey detached house, set back from Waverley Drive. The site is situated in a particularly verdant part of Waverley Drive and the mature landscaping along the front boundary of the site, together with spacing between existing properties on either side, contributes to this.

5. The properties surrounding the site vary in their individual design but are generally consistent in their prevailing character of individual properties within large, landscaped garden plots. As a result, the area has a semi-rural character.
6. The proposed development would see the ridge level of the property increased, rising from a two-storey property with roofspace to a three-storey property with roofspace. The overall footprint of the property would also increase substantially beyond that of the existing property, bringing it closer to the site boundaries.
7. While the proposed development would take some of its design cues from the existing and nearby properties, the scale of those features, which includes the roof profile and bays, is far in excess and out of proportion with the prevailing character of the surrounding area. Moreover, the position, scale and number of window openings sit uncomfortably within the overall mass of the building, appearing sporadic and out of proportion. Taken as a whole, the proposed development would be viewed as an overly large and bulky feature within its context. Overall, the development would result in an unsympathetic extension which would erode the architectural detailing and merit of the original building.
8. The proposed parking area would be expansive, dominating the front of the site. Whilst the set back from Waverley Drive would allow some landscaping to remain, it would ultimately reduce verdancy within the site. The resulting harm to the character and appearance of the area would be visible from the site entrance.
9. With respect to the viability of the trees, the previously refused application contained a much larger parking area and that this has now been reduced in size. Be that as it may, the arboricultural assessment that accompanied the appeal scheme relates to the previous scheme. Although the impact on trees is likely to be reduced as a result of the amended scheme, there is no substantive evidence before me to categorically conclude that this would be the case. As such, there is a risk to the future viability of the trees which could ultimately further reduce the verdancy of the site, harming the character and appearance of the street scene.
10. While the proposed development would take up only a small proportion of the site, the height, design, scale and bulk of the proposed development would form an incongruous addition to the street scene, harming the verdant nature of the site and surrounding area, and has the potential to have a harmful impact on the viability of existing trees. The proposed development would therefore be contrary to Policies CP2 and DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies (LP) (2012). In summary, these policies seek to ensure high quality design in development, which respect and enhance local character, be it urban or rural. This is in a similar vein to the objectives of the CSPD and National Planning Policy Framework insofar as good design is concerned.

Living conditions of future occupants

11. One of the bedrooms within Flat 7 would be served by two rooflights. Reliance on rooflights for outlook is atypical for residential properties. Due to the shallow pitch of the roof slope, outlook from this room would, in all likelihood, be compromised to the detriment of any future occupants living conditions.

12. While an extendable balcony mechanism could be installed to provide outlook and further amenity space to this room, there is no evidence before me setting out the full detail of this mechanism or that it would feasibly achieve the desired level of outlook.
13. Consequently, the proposed development would not provide a satisfactory form of development for all future occupants. Accordingly, this would be contrary to the relevant provisions of LP Policy DM9, which in summary seeks to ensure appropriate standards of amenity, and principle 8.2 of the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2017), which requires all habitable rooms in new development to maintain at least one main window with an adequate outlook.

Other Matters

14. My attention is drawn to several other appeal cases in the surrounding area¹. The specific location and context of these sites is not directly comparable to that before me. Reference is also made to the adjoining property, 24 Waverley Drive, having already been converted into multiple flats, amongst other alterations. The full details of that case, including the site's condition and appearance prior to redevelopment, are not before me. In any case, I have considered the proposed development on the evidence presented, and site observations. Those appeal decisions and the neighbouring development have not altered my conclusion.
15. I acknowledge the appellant's desire to retain the character of the existing property, their comments in respect of changing housing needs and in respect of the amendments to the design following previous advice. However, for the reasons set out above, I have found the proposed development to harm character and appearance and those matters carry little weight in favour of the proposed scheme.
16. I note the appellant's ambition to take steps to improve the existing building's low environmental rating. However, in my view, such measures are not inherently dependant on the redevelopment of the site and thus carries little weight in favour of the proposed development.
17. In respect of the Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area (SPA), I note the appellant's inclusion of a draft Section 106 Agreement in relation to the provision of contributions towards strategic access management and monitoring measures. Habitats Regulation 63(1) states that 'a competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission... must make an appropriate assessment' to establish likely effects in terms of protected sites. However, given my reasoning in respect of the main issue, there is no duty upon me in that regard and I do not need to consider it further. However, and even were I to find the proposal acceptable in this respect it would be neutral in my determination of the case and would weigh neither for nor against the proposed development.

Conclusion

18. For the reasons given above, having taken account of the development plan as a whole, the approach in the National Planning Policy Framework, along with all

¹ APP/D3640/W/18/3219014, APP/D3640/W/21/3273195, APP/D3640/D/21/3280293

other relevant material considerations, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

A Price

INSPECTOR