



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 25 October 2022

by A. Price BSc MA MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 15 November 2022

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/22/3301549

8 Copsleigh Close, Salfords RH1 5BH

- 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 Peter England against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 21/03058/F, dated 26 November 2021, was refused by notice dated 26 April 2022.
 - The development proposed is described on the application form as the 'demolition of the existing garage on the site of 8 Copsleigh Close. Ground to be excavated. Construction of a new three-bedroom five-person dwelling house adjoined to the existing house at 8 Copsleigh Close. Construction of four parking spaces and relocation of the existing dropped kerb to new location'.
-

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 proposed development comprises the demolition of the existing garage on the site of 8 Copsleigh Close, ground to be excavated, construction of a new two-bedroom four-person dwelling house adjoined to the existing house at 8 Copsleigh Close, construction of four parking spaces and relocation of the existing dropped kerb to the rear. The Council dealt with the proposal on this basis and so shall I.
3. The Council does not object to the construction of four car parking spaces or the moving of the existing dropped kerb. From my site visit, those elements of the proposed development would assimilate to an acceptable standard with the surrounding area, where hardstandings of varying types are a characteristic feature.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a corner plot occupied by a semi-detached property, garage and garden area. The site is enclosed by a low boundary wall to the front and a timber fence and mature landscaping to the side and rear. Due to their position relative to adjacent roads, and located on a bend within

Copsleigh Close, the appeal site and adjoining property are visually prominent within the streetscene.

6. Properties surrounding the site are generally of a similar period and appearance. However, a mix of bungalows, some with converted roofspace, and two-storey dwellings exist. A number of these properties have been extended or altered over time.
7. Mature landscaping within the appeal site, combined with grass verges in the public realm and visible mature trees in neighbouring, including rear, gardens, is such that this part of Copsleigh Close has a verdant character. This acts to soften the street scene and forms a pleasant approach along Copsleigh Close. Moreover, the existing modest garage structure and adjacent garden area allow views through and beyond the site. Taken together, this positively contributes to the character and appearance of the surrounding area.
8. The building line and roof profile of the proposed development would closely align with the host property and adjoining 6 Copsleigh Close, with the use of matching materials. Notwithstanding this, the two-storey development would be large, significantly and disproportionally increasing the size of the existing property. It would be positioned within an open part of the site, resulting in the loss of an important open gap in this part of Copsleigh Close, which provides physical and visual relief to the surrounding built form within the street scene. Furthermore, the scheme would intensify the urban built form here and would disrupt the balance and rhythm of the pair of semi-detached properties, appearing cramped in its plot.
9. This is exacerbated by the proximity of the proposed development to the highway. I acknowledge that a detached garage already exists in a similar position to the proposed development and that the new structure would be set further back from the road than the garage. I also note that the proposed excavation of the site to bring the ground floor level of the proposed development in line with the original house and note the proposed landscaping conditions. However, as reasoned above, the scale of the built form proposed would be considerably more prominent than that modest existing structure. Consequently, it would appear incongruous in the street scene.
10. My attention is drawn to a number of nearby developments, including at 9a Brighton Road¹, 33 Copsleigh Close², 23 Copsleigh Close and 37 Hillford Place. I have had regard to these sites, albeit with limited detail before me, and note there are some similarities in terms of strategic location and type of development. However, the circumstances at those other sites differ from the appeal site and are not directly comparable. No 9a, although of a similar design to the proposed development, is positioned on a road where the setting and approach to the site is appreciated differently to that of the appeal site.
11. Similarly, No 37 is a detached dwelling which appears to have had few extensions to its original form and the extension at No 33 is designed such that it is set back and set down from the original property's building line and roof level, reducing its overall scale. No 33, although positioned reasonably close to the boundary, is angled away from the highway due to its position in the plot. No 23, unlike the proposed development, retains a large open gap to the side

¹ 17/02046/F

² 10/01821/HHOLD

of its extension. In any event, each case must be considered on its own individual merits and impacts. I have reasoned above why I have identified harm based on the proposals before me and observations on site. Ultimately, the existence of those properties does not lead me to change my conclusion in respect of the appeal site.

12. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would appear cramped and incongruous in the street scene, harming the character and appearance of the surrounding area, contrary to the relevant provisions of Policy DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan (2019), which in summary seeks to ensure that new development is of a high quality design which promotes local distinctiveness and respects the character of the surrounding area, including the visual appearance of the immediate streetscene. This is in a similar vein to the objectives of the Reigate and Banstead Local Character and Distinctiveness Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (2021), insofar as good design is concerned.

Other Matters

13. I have carefully considered the comments raised by the appellant, including in respect of the site falling within a defined urban area, the fact that it is not listed or subject to any constraints in terms of planning designations and that the scheme has been amended during the course of the application. I note that there are some benefits of the scheme including the contribution to housing supply in the borough, the sustainable location of the site and in making efficient use of land.
14. I also note that no objections were received from a highways or tree officer perspective. Furthermore, I appreciate that the proposed development would accord with a number of other planning policy objectives, including the effect on the living conditions of neighbouring properties.
15. Nevertheless, none of those matters, nor any of the benefits of the scheme, change my conclusion on the main issues or outweigh the harm identified, and the conflict with the development plan.

Conclusion

16. For the reasons given above, having considered the development plan as a whole, the approach in the Framework, and all other material considerations, the appeal is dismissed.

A. Price

INSPECTOR