



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 20 February 2023

by Ian McHugh DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/22/3306145

19 Drake Avenue, Mytchett, Camberley, GU16 6AN

- 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 P Blow against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/0589/FFU, dated 17 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 15 August 2022.
 - The development proposed is erection of first floor front, side and rear extension and new entrance porch.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are: the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the streetscene; and the effect on the living conditions of the occupants of number 21 Drake Avenue (number 21), with regard to outlook.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

3. The appeal property is a semi-detached dwelling, which is situated in a modern residential cul-de-sac. Several properties in Drake Avenue have been extended including two-storey and first-floor side extensions. The Council states that a number of these were approved and constructed prior to current policies and guidance being adopted. Nevertheless, they are an established part of the streetscene and their presence is a material consideration.
4. Notwithstanding existing extensions, there are still notable gaps between properties along parts of Drake Avenue, particularly at first-floor level, which gives a relatively spacious appearance to the streetscene. The fact that some of the existing first-floor additions have been set-back from the original front walls of the dwellings has also reduced the visual impact of the extensions.
5. The proposal is to construct first-floor extensions above the existing single storey garage and kitchen. It would appear similar to an extension on the adjoining semi-detached dwelling at number 17 Drake Avenue (number 17). The extension would project beyond the front of the property, as does the existing garage. A footpath would be retained between the side wall of the building and the neighbouring dwelling at number 21.

6. Policy DM9 of the Council's Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document 2012 (CSDMPD) requires the design of new development to be of high quality and to respect local character. Further guidance is contained in the Council's Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document 2017. Amongst other things, the Design Guide states that extensions have the potential to erode gaps between buildings and they should be subordinate in scale. These are also guiding principles contained in the Council's Western Urban Area Character Supplementary Planning Document.
7. I consider that the Development Plan and the Council's guidance accords with the provisions of paragraph 130 of the National Planning Framework 2021 (The Framework), which also seeks to ensure that planning decisions ensure that developments add to the overall quality of the area and are sympathetic to local character.
8. The appellant contends that the appeal proposal accords with the Council's requirements and that there are examples of similar extensions in the local area. I accept that there are other extended properties, including others along Drake Avenue. However, although the proposal would match the extension at number 17, I consider that it would significantly reduce the existing gap at first-floor level between the appeal property and number 21 because of its overall height, position close to the side boundary and its projection at the front of the dwelling. The existing gap makes a positive contribution to the spacious character and appearance of the streetscene and its reduction would have an unacceptably harmful impact.
9. Therefore, I conclude on this issue that the proposal would conflict with Policy DM9 of the CSDMPD, with the provisions of its Supplementary Planning Documents and with The Framework, as referred to above.

Living Conditions

10. The neighbouring dwelling at number 21 has been extended at first-floor level above part of its garage. The extension is well set-back from the front of the property and contains a relatively large front facing window.
11. Policy DM9 of the CSDMPD states (amongst other things) that developments should respect the amenities of neighbouring properties. This is also reflected in the Council's Supplementary Planning Documents as referenced above. In particular, the Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document states that extensions should not result in a material loss of amenity to neighbouring properties as a result of overshadowing, eroding privacy or being overbearing. In addition, paragraph 130 of The Framework requires that new developments provide a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.
12. The proposed extension would project in front of the first-floor window at number 21 by 5.8m (according to the Council officer's report). I consider that this would have an adverse overbearing impact due to the length, height and overall mass of the extension. It would make the first-floor room at number 21 a less enjoyable place in which to be and it would, therefore be detrimental to the enjoyment of the dwelling. Consequently, the proposal conflicts with Policy DM9 of the CSDMPD, with the provisions of its Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and with The Framework, as referred to above.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons given above, it is concluded that the appeal be dismissed

Ian McHugh

INSPECTOR