



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 3 March 2023

by Chris Couper BA (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3630/D/22/3311490

10 Western Avenue, Thorpe, Surrey TW20 8QB

- 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 John and Grace Brown against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RU.22/1313, dated 15 August 2022, was refused by notice dated 4 October 2022.
 - The development proposed is a side dormer extension to the roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are:
 - the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the area; and
 - if any harm is caused in respect of the first issue, whether such harm is outweighed by other considerations, including the personal and health circumstances of the occupants.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning Document 2021 ('SPD') provides advice on the design of development, rather than mandatory requirements, and states that applications should be considered on their merits in relation to the specific circumstances and context.
4. At page 79 it sets out that, to avoid roof extensions appearing too dominant and harming the streetscene, they should respect the existing design, scale, massing, materials and proportions of the original building. It continues that dormer windows should remain subordinate by being set down from the ridgeline and not extending down to the eaves, and that they should harmonise with the style of the existing roof.
5. The host has a single storey, gabled form, with some accommodation in its roofspace. Although there are some two storey houses on Western Avenue, its

proportions and scale are broadly consistent with the other bungalows along this stretch of the road.

6. The proposed dormer would be set well down from the host's ridgeline. However, it would extend to the eaves, and it would cover the whole of the host's side-facing roof, with no set in from its front and rear elevations. As a result, it would be a very bulky and dominant addition to the original building, which would fail to respect its design and proportions.
7. I note that the property benefits from a Certificate of Lawfulness for a proposed loft extension (Ref: RU.22/0822) ('LDC'). However, that dormer would not extend the full length of the host's side-facing roof, and it would be set well back from the host's front face.
8. Consequently, compared to the LDC, in streetscene views looking along this row of properties, the appeal proposal would be significantly more prominent. It would be a bulky addition which would not appear subordinate to the host, and the resultant building would have a discordant rectilinear form which would be at odds with its original scale, design and proportions.
9. Whilst some nearby bungalows have been extended at roof level, none that I observed have a similarly disproportionate dormer extension as that proposed here. The examples cited at figures 3 to 5 of the appellants' statement are some distance from this site in different streetscenes.
10. For these reasons, the proposal would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and this area. It would therefore conflict with those parts of Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (2020) which require high quality and inclusive design which responds to the local context and character of the area. It would also conflict with the similar stance at paragraph 130 parts b) and c) of the National Planning Policy Framework, and with the advice in the SPD.

Personal circumstances

11. I have considered carefully the personal and medical information in the appellants' statement, including appendices S, T and U. However, whilst I note that one of the appellants has difficulties with mobility, strength and balance, I have no cogent evidence that this scheme is the only way in which his needs could be met, and that a full bathroom could be installed.
12. Personal circumstances rarely outweigh general planning matters because the effect of the development would remain long after the personal circumstances no longer apply. The personal circumstances used to justify the development would inevitably change over time, but any identified harm would remain. The benefit to the appellants therefore carries only limited weight.

Planning Balance and Conclusions

13. Having assessed the scheme on its planning merits and with regard to its context, it would significantly harm the character and appearance of the host property and the area.
14. I have considered the benefits that it would deliver to the appellants, and I have had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty contained in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, and to rights conveyed in the Human Rights Act.

15. However, the refusal of planning permission is a proportionate and necessary approach to the legitimate aim of ensuring that the harm I have identified is avoided. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Chris Couper

INSPECTOR