



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 1 March 2023

by P B Jarvis BSc (Hons) DipTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 29th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/22/3310737

1 Hermitage Close, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey GU16 8LP

- 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 Alex Smith against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/0584/FFU, dated 14 June 2022, was refused by notice dated 23 August 2022.
 - The proposed development is the erection of a first floor side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the impact on the character and appearance of the street scene.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a two storey detached property which is located in a relatively prominent location on the corner of Hermitage Close with Caroline Way. It is of modern design with pitched roof and main gable end facing the road frontage and attached single storey garage to the right hand side (west), also with pitched roof over. The dwelling has also been extended to the other side, towards Caroline Way, with a two storey addition with low sloping 'catslide' roof to the front elevation with dormer window. The adjoining dwellings in Hermitage Close are of similar design, with large front gable end elevations, a number of which have also been extended.
4. The appeal site lies within the Post War Open Estate Housing Character Area as identified in the Council's Western Urban Area Character SPD (2012) (WUAC) which notes that the area is characterised by similar age and style of dwellings with open boundaries to front gardens. Guiding principles within the WUAC include that attention should be paid to maintaining side gardens and gaps between buildings and the creation of a terracing effect will be strongly resisted.
5. The Council's Residential Design Guide SPD (2017) (RDG) also contains guidance within a number of Principles, including that extensions will be expected to be subordinate to and consistent with the form, scale and architectural style of the host building and in respect of side extensions, that they should not erode the character of the street scene.

6. It was apparent at my site visit that the immediate street scene along the southern side of Hermitage Close, within which the proposal will primarily be read, consists of individual dwellings that have been extended in various ways such that there is no longer any consistency in terms of gaps between dwellings. Furthermore, some of the original dwellings are positioned with the two storey elements quite close together, for instance Nos. 3 and 5. However, none are located so close as to completely close the gap and result in a terracing effect.
7. The proposed first floor extension would extend right up to the side boundary and result in the loss of the gap that currently exists at this level between the host dwelling and its neighbour at No. 3. Whilst the proposed first floor extension would be set back from the main front gable elevation and there is a small gap to the flank elevation of the two storey element of No. 3, it would nevertheless be read as a continuous building form with the very small gap remaining between nos. 1 and 3 being barely discernible. This would be apparent in views from both Hermitage Close and Caroline Way.
8. I note that the Appellant considers the existing single storey garage roof to be unsightly and that it has already 'filled the gap'. However, its overall height is such that a reasonable gap and space is maintained at first floor level, and the proposed extension would be noticeably higher. Furthermore, the pitched roof over the garage is similar in design to that of the existing extension and does not appear incongruous or unsightly in this context.
9. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I find that the proposal would be harmful to the character and appearance of the street scene. It would thereby conflict with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document (2012) which seeks high quality design that respects and enhances the local environment paying particular regard to scale, materials, massing and density. It would also fail to accord with principles PO1a, PO2 and PO3 of the WUAC and principles 7.8, 10.1, 10.3 and 10.4 of the RDG.
10. With regard to the National Planning Policy Framework, I find that the proposal would fail to contribute to achieving well designed places nor would it be sympathetic to the surrounding built environment.

Conclusions

11. I therefore conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

P Jarvis

INSPECTOR