
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 27 February 2023

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 30th March 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3630/D/22/3312737
41 St Anns Road, Chertsey, Surrey KT16 9DD

- 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 D West against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application Ref RU.22/1202, dated 27 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is a first-floor side extension; a hip-to-gable roof extension and a rear facing dormer.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area. The Council makes it clear that their objection relates to the first floor side extension and I shall concentrate on this in my assessment of the appeal.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to this 2-storey end of terrace house which is located within this mainly residential area. This side of St Anns Road contains short terraces of 4 houses and the opposite side contains a mix of dwelling types, predominantly of 2 storeys.
4. The terraces on this side of the road have original hipped roofs. These and the gaps between the short terraces help to provide a visual break, which contributes to the impression of space around the buildings here.
5. Policy EE1 of the Runnymede 2030 Local Plan (adopted 16 July 2020) (the LP), states that all development proposals will be expected to achieve high quality and inclusive design which responds to the local context. It adds that, in particular, development proposals will be supported where (amongst other things) they create attractive places which make a positive contribution to the Borough's townscape, paying particular regard to layout, form, scale, materials, detailing and any guidance set out in adopted planning documents including Neighbourhood Plans and the Council's Design SPD. The Council's Runnymede Design SPD (July 2021) states that, in relation to 2 storey or first floor side extensions, they should, in most cases, leave a gap of at least 1m to the side boundary. Other guidance also includes reference to extensions being

subordinate and having an acceptable effect on the original style of the building.

6. The proposed first floor side extension would have small a set-back at the front and would be sited on the boundary with No 39 St Anns Road. The roof over the extension would have a gable end, which would be set against the proposed newly formed gable. However, the roof over the extension would be set at a lower angle and so would not match the proposed roof over the main part of the house.
7. In my assessment of the important characteristics of the area, the gaps between these short terraces help to contribute to a relatively spacious feeling and makes the buildings less dominant. The proposal would result in a significant erosion of the gap between the dwellings here, not only by the construction of the extension but also by the formation of the gabled roof. I consider that the erosion of the gap would have a harmful effect on the relatively spacious character of the area, contrary to Policy EE1 and the advice in the SPD. Although No 39 St Anns Road is not built up to the side boundary, and so a gap would remain between the buildings, the Council, rightly in my view, consider that if the appeal were allowed, there could be the prospect of an extension at No 39 which would also reduce or close the gap.
8. The appellant has drawn my attention to other extensions in the area and I had the opportunity to see these at my site visit. The extension at No 29 St Annes Road is similar to the appeal scheme, although it is narrower and has a lower approved roof height than the appeal scheme and so has less visual impact, in my judgement. The extension at No 29 was approved by the Council in November 2020. This was after the LP was adopted but prior to the most recent SPD. The appellant notes this point and compares the advice in the SPD to that in the previous Householder Guide Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). In relation to 2 storey or first floor side extensions, it is similar in that they both advocate a gap of at least 1m to the side boundary. However, in relation to a 1m gap, the superseded SPG stated that *"while this may not be necessary in order to obtain planning permission it does prevent legal problems with rights over party walls, overhanging guttering, maintenance and construction of foundations. It also avoids adjacent properties taking on the appearance of a terrace where this would be harmful to the character of the area."* This has effectively been replaced in the newly adopted SPD with the following, in relation to a 1m gap being provided, *"...so as to provide suitable space around the dwelling as extended and to protect the character of established residential areas. This prevents legal problems with rights over party walls, overhanging guttering, maintenance and construction of foundations. It also avoids adjacent properties taking on the appearance of a terrace where this would be harmful to the character of the area"*. It is notable, in my view, that the previous reference to the 1m gap not being necessary in order to obtain planning permission has not been repeated in the current SPD. Additionally, the reference to providing suitable space around the dwelling to protect the character of the area, has been included. In my consideration this altered the context within which the Council considered the appeal scheme, compared to when it considered the application for No 29 St Anns Road. It also provides part of the context for my consideration of the appeal. For this reason and the differences in the appeal scheme compared to No 29, I do not find that the existence of the extension at No 29 provides a compelling precedent for allowing the appeal.

9. The appellant also refers to an extension at No15 Staines Lane. This was approved by the Council in May 2015. There are obvious physical differences between the example and the appeal scheme, notably that a side hipped roof has been constructed at No 15 Staines Lane and is referred to in the Council's assessment of it. Added to this is the different context set out in the SPD compared to the SPG. Similarly, the existence of the extension at No 15 Staines Lane does not compel me to look favourably on the appeal scheme.
10. The appellant also refers to the extension at the other end of the terrace containing No 41, at No 47, stating that the appeal scheme would help to restore some symmetry to the terrace. The extension at No 47 is quite different in appearance to the appeal scheme and I consider that the appeal scheme would not contribute in any notable way to restoring symmetry.
11. I have taken account of all other matters set out in the representations, including the benefits of the improved accommodation for the appellant. However, I find nothing sufficient to outweigh the harm that the proposal would have on the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy EE1 and the SPD. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

T Wood

INSPECTOR