



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 May 2023

by G Roberts BA (Hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 18 May 2023.

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/23/3317493

13 Green Hill Close, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 1PG

- 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 M Rashid against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. 22/1185/FFU, dated 15 November 2022, was refused by notice dated 10 January 2023.
 - The development proposed is erection of two storey side; part single storey, part two storey rear extension; two storey front porch; and front gable, following demolition of existing single storey garages, side and rear extensions. Plus fenestration changes.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. Whilst I called at the appeal property there was no answer and I was unable to gain access into the site. However, based on my observations on site and the Council's objections I was satisfied that I had seen everything I needed to and posted a notice at the property confirming this, which also confirmed that I would proceed to determine the appeal on this basis.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. The appeal site is located on the eastern side of Green Hill Close and forms part of a small cul-de-sac of predominantly detached linked two storey properties set within generous plots. The appeal site and most of the properties on the eastern side are separated from the road by a communal verge that includes a number of mature trees. Whilst some of the properties have been extended and altered the level of change that has occurred is modest. The host property is linked to its neighbour, 15 Green Hill Close (No.15) by their respective single storey flat roofed garages. The latter are a particular characteristic of the area and a positive feature that contributes towards the areas spaciousness and openness. It also allows important views of the mature trees that form the backdrop to the rear of appeal site and adjoining properties.
5. The appeal site and surrounding properties form part of the Hedged Estates Character Area within the Western Urban Character Area Supplementary

Planning Document (May 2012) (WUCA). The latter states that the Hedged Estates have a very green character comprising small mid to late 20th Century infill estates with predominantly generous plots accommodating detached buildings. Whilst the architectural style is mixed the buildings are often well spaced which has enabled the development of mature vegetation.

6. The WUCA states that one of the pressures on this Character Area is the reduction of gaps caused as a result of extensions and infilling. In view of this, various Guiding Principles apply with HE1(a) requiring new development to have regard to buildings being set in spacious plots, with space between and around them to allow the maintenance of its verdant character. Also, HE2, which states that new development that is contrary to the prevailing development form of detached houses within spacious plots or leads to a cramped and overly prominent appearance, will be opposed.
7. The appeal proposal comprises a number of elements including rear extensions to which the Council have not raised any objection. With regard to the proposed two storey side extension, two storey front porch and gable, their combined scale, mass, height and width would, in my view, be excessive and result in overly dominant additions to the host property and streetscene. The proposed extensions would overwhelm the simple form and detailing to the host. The proposed side extension would in itself significantly reduce the gap with its neighbour and in doing so result in the loss of space in and around the host property which, as I confirmed above, is an important and positive characteristic of this part of the Hedged Estates.
8. As I observed on my site visit, the host property is visible from various public vantage points, with a well used public footpath running past its open front garden. From these viewpoints, the proposed extensions would neither appear subservient nor proportional to the host and combined would result in a development that would be visually prominent, out of scale and out of keeping with the host and its neighbours. Whilst I accept that the appeal proposal would not lead to the loss of any mature vegetation the proposed extensions would not sit comfortably on frontage to the appeal site and would result in a development that is harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and wider streetscene.
9. As such, this element of the appeal proposal would be contrary to Guiding Principles HE1(a) and HE2 of the WUAC. For similar reasons, the proposal would also be contrary to Principles 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 of the Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (September 2017) (RDG). Amongst other requirements these Principles seek to resist extensions that would: erode gaps that contribute to visual amenity and character; are not subservient to the host; are over dominant and out of keeping; and project beyond the main building line or appear prominent within the streetscene.
10. Whilst I accept that the host property is set back from the road and that the existing building line is somewhat staggered, as I found above the proposed extensions would: erode an important gap and reduce the openness and spaciousness around the host property; result in a development that is neither subservient or proportional to the host; and result in dominant and prominent additions to the host property. As such, this aspect of the appeal proposal would be in direct conflict with a number of the relevant Principles to the RDG. Based on the evidence before me there are no considerations or personal

circumstances that would outweigh this conflict with the RDG or the harm that the development would cause to the character and appearance of the host property and streetscene.

11. Within the Appellant's Grounds of Appeal are photographs of various properties in the area with front gables or gable extensions. Whilst no property details have been provided, I accept that they show that gable extensions are commonly found in the area, albeit it is unclear whether the examples shown are new extensions or gables that formed part of the original designs. Even so, they are modest additions and are not comparable to the dominant gable and other additions proposed to the host property. In relation to the approved gable extension to 33 Green Hill Close, I agree with the Council that this does not form part of the local context to the appeal site. However, that gable extension is a subordinate addition that has maintained the space about the building. Moreover, the layout and building relationships that arise with its neighbours are very different to the linked form and layout of the appeal property with its neighbour (No.15).
12. The Appellant has also referred to an appeal decision at 16 Dunbar Road in Frimley (ref. APP/D3640/D/20/3265629) where approval was given in March 2021 for an extension to a property also located within the Hedged Estates. Whilst I have not been provided within any approved plans, it is apparent from the decision that the proposal related to a modest first floor extension and thus a much smaller scale of development to that proposed on the appeal site. This view was reaffirmed when I visited the site in question, from which it was also apparent that the local context of this property was very different to that of the appeal site. The properties in Dunbar Road are more densely developed, sit on small plots, with the buildings sited close to the road and with limited space in and around them, and thus a far less verdant character.
13. For all the above these reasons, none of the examples referred to are, in my view, comparable to the appeal proposal and they do not therefore affect the findings I have reached on this issue.
14. Accordingly, I find that the combined scale, mass, height and width of the proposed side and front extensions and gable would result in significant harm to the character and appearance of the host property and surrounding area. As such, this aspect of the appeal proposal would be contrary to policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2011 – 2028 (February 2012), Principles 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 of the RDG, Guiding Principles HE1(a) and HE2 of the WUAC and paragraph 130 of the National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021). The latter and policy DM9 seek, amongst other requirements, to ensure that new development is of a high quality, respects and enhances local character and is appropriate in terms of its scale, massing, bulk and appearance.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and having taken all other matters raised into account I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

G Roberts

INSPECTOR