



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 August 2023

by P Terceiro BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 14 September 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/22/3312939

Land at 42 Pine Walk, Woodmansterne, Surrey SM7 3PY

- 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 and Mrs Brindle against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 22/01700/F, dated 28 July 2022, was refused by notice dated 27 September 2022.
 - The development proposed is the extension of double garage and conversion to two bedroom dwelling.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The address of the appeal site is incomplete on the application form. As such, I have taken the site address from the appeal form.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The appeal site comprises the detached single storey garage to No 42 Pine Walk. The garage is accessed from Upper Pines and is highly visible within the street scene, due to level changes. Properties within the immediate vicinity of the appeal site are generally 2-storey detached or semi-detached dwellings, mostly set within good-sized rectangular plots with deep back gardens. The frontages are enclosed and have driveways, as well as areas of soft landscaping. Typically, dwellings are designed with bay windows at ground floor and hipped roofs. Whilst there are bungalows further along Upper Pines, these properties are some distance from the appeal site and do not influence the character and appearance of the appeal site's immediate surroundings.
5. The proposal would utilise and extend the existing garage to the front, side and rear to create an independent dwelling. The appeal site would be separated from No 42 by a new fence. The front extension would bring the building forward on the plot and, because of its raised position on the entrance to Upper Pines, the proposed dwelling would be particularly prominent. Due to its single storey design and elevated position, the proposal would not sit comfortably within the prevailing character and appearance of adjacent two-storey properties and would appear incongruous in its immediate surroundings.

6. Furthermore, notwithstanding that the Council does not have any standard for outdoor space, the proposed property would have very limited space to the rear. The layout of the plot would be markedly different, with the dwelling being located close to the rear boundary. This would not be typical of the area as the depth of the plot would be discernible because of the proposed boundary fence. As a consequence of the level changes, the proposed development would be visible from public vantage points and the plot would appear cramped, contrary to the established prevailing pattern of development.
7. I note the appellant's comments about the size of nearby plots, their width, and varied gaps between buildings. However, as I have set out, the design of the dwelling and limited size of the plot would be inconsistent with the predominant pattern and grain of development in the locality and would look harmfully out of place.
8. The existing garage is a domestic outbuilding with a design and size that reflects its use. During my site visit I observed other garages in the vicinity. As such, I do not agree with the appellants comments that the existing building is out of keeping with the street scene.
9. My attention is drawn to other approved schemes elsewhere in the Borough comprising small plots. However, these schemes are not comparable with the appeal scheme insofar as their surrounding context and site-specific circumstances are different. These other decisions do not lead me to a different conclusion on the appeal scheme which is an elevated and prominent site on the entrance to Upper Pines.
10. In light of the above, I conclude that the proposal would be detrimental to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal would be contrary to Policy DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan Development Management Plan 2019 (DMP), which seeks to achieve high quality design in new development. The proposal would also conflict with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) where it seeks to ensure that development is sympathetic to local character.
11. The appellant sets out that the proposal would comply with Policy DES2 of the DMP. However, I do not agree that the proposal would comply with This Policy where it requires that development of garden land must be designed to ensure that it is in keeping with the street scene.
12. The Council's reason for refusal refers to Policy CS4 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan: Core Strategy 2014. This policy concerns valued townscapes and the historic environment. Based on the information before me I do not find this policy to be relevant in the context of this appeal.

Other Matters

13. The proposal would contribute to boosting the supply of housing and would provide an additional house in an accessible location. However, the provision of one new dwelling would make a very modest contribution to the housing within the area and I have no evidence that the Council is failing to meet its 5 year housing land supply requirement.

Conclusion

14. Overall, I conclude that the proposal would conflict with the development plan as a whole and there are no material considerations of sufficient weight to indicate that a decision should be made otherwise than in accordance with it. Therefore, the appeal is dismissed.

P Terceiro

INSPECTOR