The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 23 October 2023

by B Phillips BSc MSc MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 1 November 2023

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/23/3319390
Fairholme Flexford Road, Normandy, Surrey GU3 2EF

- 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 Matthew Mansfield against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
- The application Ref 22/P/01972, dated 17 January 2023, was refused by notice dated 7 March 2023.
- The development proposed is the erection of single storey front and rear extension, conversion of loft space to habitable accommodation, roof alterations to include raised ridge height, rear dormer, and front chalet style extensions, demolition of conservatory and changes to fenestration.

Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for the erection of single storey front and rear extension, conversion of loft space to habitable accommodation, roof alterations to include raised ridge height, rear dormer, and front chalet style extensions, demolition of conservatory and changes to fenestration at Fairholme Flexford Road, Normandy, Surrey GU3 2EF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 22/P/01972, dated 17 January 2023, and the plans submitted with it, subject to the following conditions:

    1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.

    2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: 1872- 121, 1872-115, 1872-111, 1872-112, 1872-100 and 1872-116.

    3) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall be constructed in the materials shown on plan no 1872 – 115.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development is taken from part E of the appeal form and the Council's Decision Notice. This is in the interest of clarity.

3. I have also dealt with another appeal (Ref. APP/ Y3615/D/23/3326093) on the same site. That appeal is the subject of a separate decision.

4. Policy H5 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies June 2022 is referred to in the first refusal reason and officer report. The Council have clarified that this has been renumbered as Policy H4 in the March 2023 adopted version of this plan. Given the unchanged text of the

policy, no interested parties will be prejudiced by my consideration of this policy.

Main Issues

5. The main issues in this case are:

   - the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the property and surroundings; and
   - the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupants of Claymore, with respect to outlook and light.

Reasons

Character and appearance

6. The appeal property is sited on Flexford Road, a lengthy residential street facing open land. Whilst there is a predominance of bungalows, the road is characterised by a mix of two storey/dormer bungalows and single storey dwellings sat within sizable plots, and whilst the appeal property, a bungalow, sits next to a bungalow to the east, its adjacent neighbour to the west, 'Bramcombe' is a two storey property, and the new dwellings immediately to the rear, are dormer bungalows.

7. There is also variety in appearance, with large flat roofed dormers, small, pitched roof dormers, hipped main roofs and gabled roofs visible. Properties are set back from the road, along a general building line, with some variation in dwelling position. This set back and consistent separation gaps between dwellings give the street an open character. The dwellings are generally finished in render or/and brickwork, in a variety of colour, with some tile hanging visible.

8. The existing dwelling is a bungalow of no particular architectural merit. However, it is modest in scale and has an unassuming presence within the street scene. The extensions would add considerably to the upper parts of the building, creating a more substantial structure. Nevertheless, given the mixed surrounding context, the addition of a second floor to the existing single storey property would not therefore appear incongruous, and the proposed raised ridge line would remain clearly below that of the adjacent neighbour, Bramcombe. Its scale and bulk would be comparable to this neighbouring property, and other two storey dwellings along the street, and the retention of the separation gaps to both adjacent neighbours and set back from the highway would limit its impact on the open character of the street.

9. The introduction of two front gables would match those on the existing property, and whilst a third central gable is proposed, this would not appear incongruous within the various architectural features within the street scene. The additional projection forward compared to the existing building footprint is minimal, and there would be no conflict with the general building line. The built form would not therefore appear overly prominent.

10. The large areas of glazing on this central gable would be unusual within the street scene, however, given the variety in the appearance of dwellings along Flexford Road already apparent, it would not detract from any consistent built form. The materials proposed, brick and render are appropriate, and again,

given the variety in brick colour used along the road, would not look incongruous.

11. The rear dormer would be substantial in width and have a flat roof, however, it would sit comfortably within the extended roof plane, set in from both sides and from the ridge and eaves. It would not detract from the redeveloped properties character and appearance and would not be overly dominating. The development's design would result in a cohesive building form.

12. By reason of scale and design, the proposed development would not represent subservient and proportionate additions to the original property. When assessed as extensions therefore, I acknowledge that this would conflict with Policy H4 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies (2023) (DMP) which requires extensions to take into account the form, scale, height, character, materials and proportions of the existing building.

13. However, the scale of the additions would result in, in effect, the creation of a 2-storey dwelling of a materially different design to the current property. When assessed as such, as set out above, I have found that the resultant property would not appear out of place within the established street scene.

14. In light of the above, I conclude that the resulting 2 storey dwelling would not cause harm to the character and appearance of the property and surroundings. There is no conflict with Policy G5 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003) (LP)**,** Policy D1 of the Guildford Local Plan: Strategy and Sites (2019) (SS) and DMP Policy D4, which, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), collectively require development to respect the scale, height and proportions and materials of the surrounding environment. There is also no conflict with the advice set out in the Supplementary Planning Document 'Residential Extensions and Alterations' (2018), which requires dormers to be sympathetic to the existing dwelling.

Living conditions

15. The neighbour to the east, 'Claymore', is a bungalow with two side windows and doorway facing the appeal property. These windows serve a bathroom and kitchen/dining area.

16. The bathroom window is obscure glazed and the outlook from the kitchen window is mainly of a boundary hedge, and the side wall/roof of the appeal property. The existing separation gap between the dwellings would remain unchanged, and whilst the additional height and depth of the proposed development would result in the loss of any glimpses of the sky above the existing property roof, the outlook would mostly remain of the boundary hedging and built form.

17. As such, I am satisfied that the proposal would not unduly harm the outlook from the side facing windows of this neighbouring property.

18. I observed that the kitchen/dining area is also served by large glazed double doors facing the rear, in addition to, within a rear projecting element, side windows facing away from the boundary. As such, this space is served by numerous sources of sunlight and daylight, and the boundary facing window is a secondary window.

19. The light from this side window and the doorway would, by virtue of the extension's additional height and bulk, be reduced by the proposal, and I note the third party representation about breaking a 25 degree line in this regard and the importance of this room. In addition, the rear facing window/doors face north, limiting natural sunlight. Again, I note the third party representation relating to the amount of sunlight entering the room through this window and door, however, given the secondary nature of the side facing window and door, I am satisfied that there would remain sufficient sunlight and daylight serving this space.

20. The proposed study in the appeal property is only served by a side facing window and as such is not comparable to the kitchen/dining area of Claymore.

21. The single storey projection of this neighbour, and an existing outbuilding/garage on the appellant's side of the boundary would sit in between the rear patio area of Claymore and the appeal property, thereby limiting the impact of the development on light reaching this patio area.

22. I conclude therefore that the development would not harm the living conditions of Claymore, in respect to light and outlook. There is no conflict with the protection of amenity goals of LP Policy G1, DMP Policy D5 and the Framework. There is also no conflict the general amenity protection advice set out in SPD.

Other Matters

23. I note that letters of objection from third parties have been submitted and have had regard to these. The first floor rear facing windows face directly down the garden of the appeal property. Any overlooking of either adjoining neighbouring property would be oblique and limited and would not lead to unusable garden space or unacceptable living conditions for the occupiers of either neighbouring property.

24. Any inaccuracies on the application form with regards to the applicant are not matter for this appeal, and I have considered the proposal on the information submitted. The conversion of one bungalow to a two storey dwelling would not unduly effect the balance of dwelling types in the area. In any case, each case is considered on its own merits.

Conditions

25. A list of suggested conditions has been provided that the Council and/or the appellants consider to be appropriate. I have considered these in light of the PPG. For clarity and to ensure compliance with the PPG, I have amended some of the suggested wording.

26. In addition to the standard time limit condition, I have imposed a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans as this provides certainty. A condition to ensure matching materials is not necessary as there are elements which sit comfortably within the street scene but do not match the existing property. As such, a condition to secure the conditions as set out on the plans is appropriate. This is to ensure that the dwelling would not appear incongruous within the street scene.

Conclusion

27. There are no material considerations that indicate the development should be determined other than in accordance with the development plan. For the reasons given above and having regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is allowed.

B Phillips

INSPECTOR