



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 18 January 2024

by Michael J Muston BA(Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 07 February 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/23/3333123

20 Larchwood Glade, Camberley, Surrey GU15 3UW

- 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 D Jones against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 23/0812/FFU, dated 28 July 2023, was refused by notice dated 10 November 2023.
 - The development proposed is a second floor side extension.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. The development was described on the application form as set out in the heading above. This was amended by the Council, to "*a first floor side/front extension.*" This describes the works more accurately than the original description. I have therefore used this amended description as the basis for my decision.

Main Issue

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

Reasons

4. Of particular relevance to this appeal are two Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). The Council adopted the Western Urban Area Character (WUAC) in May 2012. This includes a number of guiding principles (GPs). GP WUA 2 says that new development should not erode the existing positive character of the Character Area or reinforce existing negative features.
5. The appeal site is located within an area called Post War Open Estates. GP P01 says in relation to this area that new development should pay particular regard to criteria that include the maintenance of space between and around buildings, with particular attention to maintaining gaps between the side elevations of buildings at first floor level.
6. GP P03 says that development that erodes the integrity of the post war architectural design will be unacceptable, and that original ridgeline heights, building lines, architectural detailing, materials and colours should be reflected in new development.

7. The Council also adopted a Residential Design Guide (RDG) as SPD in 2017. Principle 10.1 of the RDG says that extensions which erode gaps which contribute to visual amenity and character will be resisted, that extensions will be expected to be subordinate and consistent with the form, scale, and architectural style of the original building, and that developments that are over-dominant or out of keeping will be resisted.
8. Principle 10.2 of the RDG says that front extensions should not protrude too far forward from the main building line, or be prominent in the street scene. Principle 10.3 says that side extensions should not erode the character of the street scene and local area, and should remain sympathetic and subservient to the main building. I attach considerable weight to the advice contained in the WUAC and the RDG.
9. The proposal would result in the gap at first floor level between Nos 20 and 22 being reduced, contrary to the advice in GP P01 of the WUAC. In addition, the height and, in particular, the width of the proposed gable would be greater than that of the existing gable at the property. Combined with this new gable also being slightly closer to the road than the existing, it would make the proposed extension appear over-dominant, and not subordinate to the form or architectural design of the original building, contrary to Principles 10.1 and 10.3 of the RDG. It would also be prominent in the street scene, contrary to Principle 10.2, and erode the integrity of the post war architectural design, contrary to GP P03 of the WUAC.
10. The appellant has drawn my attention to a number of examples in very close proximity to the appeal site where permission has been granted for first floor side/front extensions. I was able to see these on my site visit, and note that in particular the character of the eastern side of this part of Larchwood Glade has changed over the years to one in which first floor side/front extensions are part of that character.
11. However, all of these examples were permitted prior to the adoption of the WUAC and RDG. It is clear that the Council considers that many of these changes have had a negative effect on the character of the area, made clear by GP WUA 2 of the WUAC stating that new development should not reinforce existing negative features. It would therefore not be appropriate to allow further development contrary to the advice contained in these two SPDs, on the grounds that other such development already exists.
12. This appeal proposal is, as I have set out above, contrary to a number of pieces of advice within the WUAC and RDG. In particular, the width of the proposed new gable would be out of proportion with the host dwelling and with other dwellings on this side of Larchwood Glade, including those that have been extended. The width of the gable would, as stated by the appellant in their appeal document, be of a similar size to that at No 28 opposite. However, this extension is an example of the kind of large and overly dominant extension that the Council is now seeking to resist.
13. I therefore conclude that the proposal would harm the character and appearance of the area, contrary to Policy DM9 of the Core Strategy & Development Management Policies 2011-2028, which says that development should respect and enhance the local character and pay particular regard to scale, materials, massing and bulk. It is also contrary to the advice set out in the adopted SPDs set out above.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Michael J Muston

INSPECTOR