



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 April 2024

by Robert Naylor BSc (Hons) MPhil MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 23 May 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/23/3333885

81 London Road, Guildford, Surrey GU1 1YT

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Ms S Reith against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/P/00450.
 - The development proposed is described as a single and two storey rear and side extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A revised National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) was published by the Government on 19 December and updated on 20 December 2023 and accompanied by a written ministerial statement (WMS). I have familiarised myself with the content of the revised Framework and the accompanying WMS and none of the revisions to the Framework would be material to this appeal. Having considered the revisions and in light of the principles of natural justice, in this instance I do not consider it necessary to invite any submissions from the parties on the revised Framework. Any references to the Framework hereafter in this decision are to the latest version.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property a non-designated heritage asset (NDHA) and the surrounding area.

Reasons

4. The area is mainly residential although there is a small group of shops nearby at Kingpost Parade. The appeal site is a large semi-detached property located on the northern side of London Road, known as 'Marlyns Cottage' dating from around 1820. The proposal seeks to redevelop the existing property through part single part two storey side and rear extensions to provide additional habitable accommodation.
5. The National Planning Practice Guidance advises that NDHAs are identified by plan-making bodies via a number of processes, which can include being designated as part of the decision-making process on planning applications¹, however the Council identified this particular site as an NDHA through a locally listed designation in 2019.

¹ Paragraph: 040 Reference ID: 18a-040-20190723

6. The appeal site makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the surrounding area through its architectural value, accentuated by its prominent position. The property also has a group value, with the adjoining building at No 79, forming a small cluster of quaint historic buildings. The use of traditional materials and construction techniques, further provide historical and attractive architectural interest to the area. As such the site contains a level of historical and architectural value that would be sufficient for this building to warrant being considered a NDHA.
7. The existing property has been altered over time and already contains several extensions to the original building. These additions are neutral in terms of the character and appearance of the NDHA and its setting, given their relatively subservient nature. However, when viewed from the front, the proposal would significantly increase the scale of development, creating discordant additions to the site and its vernacular characteristics. These would be particularly visible given its prominent position within the streetscene. In particular the two-storey side extension would compete with the host property, rather than complementing it, thus not respecting its special architectural and historical interest or its local importance.
8. I acknowledge that the proposal has been set back from the front and would use complimentary materials in an attempt to provide a subservient appearance. However, the overall design, scale and massing of the proposal would detract from the traditional form of the building which is inherent to its character and appearance and its significance as an NDHA.
9. Furthermore, the increase in mass and footprint of the proposal would enclose the gap to the boundary of the site, reducing the existing and meaningful visual separation between the NDHA and neighbouring buildings to the east. These extensions would not provide proportionate or harmonious additions and would be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal building, an NDHA, and thus would not make a positive contribution to the local character and distinctiveness of the area.
10. Paragraph 203 of the Framework states that the effect of an application on the significance of a NDHA should be taken into account in determining that application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect an NDHA, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
11. The proposed development would improve the quantity of internal living accommodation within an existing dwelling and, therefore, would lead to an improvement in the local housing stock, a benefit that would carry moderate weight in support of the scheme. However, based on the evidence before me, this benefit does not outweigh the harm that would be caused to the NDHA, nor its setting in the surrounding area.
12. Consequently, the proposal would harm the architectural and historical significance of the NDHA and the character and appearance of the surrounding area. The proposal would therefore be contrary to policies D1 and D3 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan Strategy and Sites 2015-2034 adopted April 2019; Policies H4, D4 and D23 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan Development Management Policies, adopted March 2023; Policy B-EN 4 of the Burpham Neighbourhood Plan 2015 - 2035, adopted 2016 and the aims and objectives of the Guildford Borough Council Supplementary Planning Document

Residential Extensions and Alterations, adopted 2018, and the provisions of the Framework insofar as they relate to this main issue. These collectively seek good design which positively contributes to local character and distinctiveness, and preserves or enhances the significance of heritage assets including NDHA's, amongst other things.

Other Matters

13. The appellant draws my attention to a previous permission² granted at the site for a two-storey side extension, single storey rear extension and single storey rear infill extension following demolition of the existing attached garage. Full details of this proposal have not been provided and thus I cannot conclude with any certainty that it is directly comparable to the proposal before me. Whilst I acknowledge that this proposal also could have undermined the building's architectural integrity and setting, this was determined prior to its designation as an NDHA. Furthermore, as this scheme has now lapsed, I apportion it limited weight.

Conclusion

14. The proposal does not accord with the development plan as a whole and there are no other considerations, including the Framework, that indicate that I should take a different decision other than in accordance with this. Therefore, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Robert Naylor

INSPECTOR

² Guildford Borough Council Planning Ref: 16/P/02555