



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 July 2024

by H Miles BA (hons), MA, MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 24 July 2024

Appeal Ref: APP/C3620/D/23/3335810

Talskiddy, Meadowside, Bookham, Surrey KT23 3LG

- 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 Mr Dunn against the decision of Mole Valley District Council.
 - The application Ref is MO/2023/1118/PLAH
 - The development proposed is two-storey and single-storey front, side and rear extensions.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the area, including with regard to the Area of Special Character.

Reasons

3. This part of Meadowside is characterised by detached dwellings, set back from the road behind spacious landscaped front gardens. Generally there is clear separation between properties, particularly at first floor and above, and dwellings appear subservient to their garden setting. These features contribute to an attractive green and spacious character. Policy ENV17 of the Mole Valley Local Plan (2000) (LP) identifies The Park, Park View/Meadowside as a residential area of special character. The Built Up Areas Character Appraisal Bookham and Fetcham (2010) identifies its important features as including large detached houses set back from the road, behind mature, generally well-landscaped front gardens with generous spacing around and between buildings.
4. Talskiddy is a modest house, to the front it appears as a bungalow with a dormer containing first floor accommodation, although to the rear the first floor is not contained within a roofslope. There is a single storey double garage to one side, and a generous gap to the boundary on the other.
5. There are a number of chalet bungalows, particularly to the eastern part of Meadowside including the appeal site as well as the adjoining Merrymeet. There are also some larger dwellings including Glenmore, Beechcroft and The Poplars further along Meadowside. These include two storey elevations close to the boundary with ridge heights above the prevailing height in the surroundings. Hawthorns also has a side elevation close to a boundary. However, these features are not so common as to form an overriding part of the character and appearance of the area.

6. Overall the spacing and setting of properties within generous landscaped gardens results in a green and spacious character to this area. Although it is one of the smaller properties, the modest size and generous separation at Talskiddy makes a positive contribution to these features.
7. The proposed development would result in a large two storey dwelling. There would be a two storey elevation to the east, annotated to be 2.5m from the boundary, and a single storey garage with a pitched roof above to the west, annotated with 3.9m separation from the boundary to the two storey element. The side hedges would be retained. It would include a pitched roof with three gable features to the frontage. Whilst the eaves height would be similar to the two-storey adjacent property at Byways, overall it would be taller than the neighbouring properties and this height is emphasised by the multiple gables.
8. The appeal scheme would result in a sizeable dwelling that occupies the majority of the width of the plot and, particularly to the east, would bring development at first floor and above close to the boundary. It would significantly reduce the space around the building. Consequently, the built form would dominate the open space to the frontage. This would harmfully erode the spaciousness of the building in this plot and would undermine this important characteristic of this area.
9. Materials are proposed which would provide some variation to the elevations, however this does not alter the overall scale of the development which is harmful for the reasons discussed above. Given the varied appearance of buildings along this road the change to the detailing of the host dwelling would not be harmful. Albeit that does not change that the resultant development would be unacceptable as set out elsewhere in this decision.
10. There have been previous applications for larger dwellings which have been refused, and the appellant has sought to address the previous reasons for refusal with the current application. Nevertheless, this decision is based upon the scheme before me now and it is unacceptable for the reasons set out above. While I have noted the appellant's concerns regarding the Council's handling of the planning application, that does not alter my assessment of the planning merits of the proposal.
11. Therefore, the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area, including with regard to the Area of Special Character. As such it would be contrary to policy CS14 of the Mole Valley Core Strategy and policies ENV17, ENV22, ENV23 and ENV24 of the LP. Together these require that development must respect and enhance the character and appearance of the area, including the setting and spaces about buildings with particular regard to The Park Park View/Meadowside residential area of special character.

Conclusion

12. The proposal would not accord with the development plan and there are no other considerations to indicate that the appeal should be determined otherwise. Therefore, for the reasons given above, I conclude that this appeal should be dismissed.

H Miles INSPECTOR