
Appeal Decisions

Site visit made on 10 July 2024

by A Knight BA PG Dip MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 6 August 2024

Appeal A Ref: APP/L3625/W/23/3328336

13 Green Lane, Lower Kingswood, Surrey KT20 6TB

- 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 P & K Anderson LLP against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
- The application Ref is 23/00840/F.
- The development proposed is the erection of a pair of x2 semi-detached dwellings following the demolition of existing dwelling.

Appeal B Ref: APP/L3625/W/24/3336450

13 Green Lane, Lower Kingswood, Surrey KT20 6TB

- 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 P & K Anderson LLP against the decision of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/01922/F.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a dwelling following the demolition of existing dwelling.
-

Decision

1. Appeal A is dismissed.
2. Appeal B is dismissed.

Procedural Matters

3. As set out above there are two appeals on this site. I have considered each proposal on its individual merits. However, to avoid duplication I have dealt with the two schemes together, except where otherwise indicated.

Main Issue

4. The main issue in both appeals is the effect of each proposed development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

5. The appeal site comprises a small, detached bungalow on a long plot that narrows slightly to the front. The site is in an established residential area bound by open countryside beyond. Green Lane is characterised by a mix of single and two-storey, detached and semi-detached dwellings, mostly on substantial plots. Whilst the mix of property styles, heights, and designs is notable, there are nevertheless some distinct, consistent elements to two-storey dwellings, as described below.

6. In cases where a main roof ridge is parallel to the road, any front dormers are generally modest, occupying a small portion of the roof slope. Where ridges run perpendicular to the road and a gable end is formed, there is generally only one per property, sometimes supplemented by far smaller dormers. In these ways, most local homes retain a reserved presence in the street, creating a well-appointed but understated feel to the area.
7. Front boundary treatments in the street include hedges, walls, fences, and gates, of varying height and design, with some plots left open to the front. Behind this, homes are generally set well back from the street, and possess private parking areas to the front.
8. Such parking areas are generally substantial; the frontages of many detached dwellings provide space enough to turn a car around as well as to park, whilst semi-detached homes commonly share a central access serving parking spaces on either side. Most homes can accommodate at least two cars, and many have space for more. A significant number of these substantial parking areas are visible past low front boundaries, and are characteristic of the street, therefore.
9. The development proposed in Appeal A is two semidetached houses but, due to the hipped roof design, central chimney, and single point of access from the street, would be appear as one building with a substantial, central, double gable. This central element would be striking, projecting significantly outwards from the main body of the building, and creating long, tall, roof slopes both on its outside flanks and in the central valley. This combination of highly prominent features would result in a bulky, dominant, incongruous roof form, harmfully at odds with the generally reserved character of the street.
10. The double gable would be supplemented by an additional dormer on either side. These dormers add further bulk to the roof overall, exacerbating the harm caused by the central gables.
11. The development in Appeal A would create four parking spaces, and a driveway large enough to turn a car around in. The parking area would be substantial, but no more so than many others in the street. Whilst the frontage may house four cars at once, that is not an uncommonly high number, particularly where nearby semidetached homes are concerned, and the parking area would not appear unusually busy in the local context.
12. The proposal to incorporate a retaining wall and level ground in place of the existing natural slope would not harm the character of the street, as the extent of the excavation would be modest, the retaining wall itself is capable of being an attractive feature, and significant room has been left for new planting as well as the retention of the existing established front hedge. These features could be secured via a suitable condition. For these reasons, I find that the proposed parking arrangement would not harm the character and appearance of the area.
13. The development proposed in Appeal B would result in a single dwelling with two front dormers which, though of different sizes, would both be substantial. The size and number of the dormers would conflict with the general pattern of development in the street as described above, appearing incongruous as a result.

14. The side roof slopes of both dormers would be a continuation of the sides of the main roof, with no break or set back between them. This would result in a discordantly bulky and dominant overall roof shape, intrusive when viewed from the street, and at odds with the reserved character of the setting.
15. Local dormers are generally positioned to preserve the original roof slope on all four sides, making them appear subordinate to the main roof. In contrast, the appeal dormers would expose only a small central area of the main roof slope. Whilst the dormers would be set back from the ground floor front wall, this would not result in the main roof continuing past the dormers on either outside edge. As a result, the effect of the set back would be minimal, and not prevent the dormers being harmful as described above.
16. The proposed dwelling would occupy most of the width of the plot, leaving a gap of some 1m (or some 70cm from the eaves) to the east boundary. It would not be the only house in the street to leave such a modest gap, and a wider gap would be left to the western boundary. Nevertheless, the tapered shape of the appeal site and position of the site access are such that the gap to the east boundary would be the most visible from the street.
17. The short gap to the eastern boundary and the substantial width of both the ground floor and of the two dormers, which themselves would be built to the outside edges of the first floor, would combine to give the appearance that each element of the house had been built to its very edges. This would give the development a condensed and cramped appearance within the plot, uncharacteristic of the setting and harmful to its appearance as a result.
18. I acknowledge that the constituent parts within the roof designs for both schemes reflect features, styles and materials found in the local area. As set out above, however, it is the extent, number and combination of those features that has rendered both proposals unacceptable.
19. I appreciate that in both schemes the proposed building would be set further back from the road than the existing property, aligning more with the local building line. In both cases, the proposed building would still be prominent from the road and the degree of set back would not overcome the harms I have identified above, therefore. In addition, the existing property is so modest in size and appearance, and breaches the building line in such a minor way, that it is not harmful. Consequently, removing it would not be an intrinsic benefit in itself. For these reasons I attach minimal weight to the greater set back.
20. Overall, and notwithstanding my findings in respect of the parking area, the development proposed in Appeal A would result in a bulky, dominant, incongruous roof form, harmfully at odds with the character of the street, and contrary therefore to Policy DES1 of the Reigate and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 where it requires development to reinforce local distinctiveness and respect the character of the surrounding area, as well as to the similar aims of the Local Character and Distinctiveness Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and the Householder Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Guidance.
21. The development proposed in Appeal B would result in a compressed, cramped form of development, incongruous and harmfully at odds with the character of the street, and contrary therefore to Policy DES1 of the Reigate

and Banstead Development Management Plan 2019 where it requires development to reinforce local distinctiveness and respect the character of the surrounding area, as well as to the similar aims of the Local Character and Distinctiveness Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and the Householder Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Guidance.

Other Matters

22. I appreciate that the appeal proposals include revised plans following an earlier application, but I must form my view on the merits of the appeal proposals in isolation.

Conclusion

23. Both proposals conflict with the development plan and the material considerations do not indicate that the appeals should be decided other than in accordance with it. Both appeals are dismissed, therefore.

A Knight

INSPECTOR

Appendix 1

List of those who have appealed.

Reference	Case Reference	Appellant
Appeal A	APP/L3625/W/23/3328336	P & K Anderson LLP
Appeal B	APP/L3625/W/24/3336450	P & K Anderson LLP