



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 16 December 2024

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 January 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/24/3354056

14 Curley Hill Road, Lightwater, Surrey GU18 5YG

- 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 V Chari against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref. is 24/0686/FFU.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a two-storey front extension; a single storey rear extension with roof terrace over; changes to fenestration; internal alterations and associate landscaping and levelling.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host building and its surroundings.

Reasons

3. The Officer's Report sets out the background to the appeal in that the application is an amendment to a scheme refused in April 2024, with the changes including the removal of a front and rear dormer and outdoor pool; reductions in size comprising 2m less depth for the two-storey front extension; a 1.7m height reduction of the front gable, and 3m less depth for the single storey rear extension. The Council acknowledges that these modifications would reduce the impact of the proposal and I have taken them into account.
4. However, the existing building is a bungalow with rooms in the roof and with the living space facilitated by two modestly sized front dormers and a larger dormer to the rear. Notwithstanding the amendments made, the appeal scheme remains as a development that fundamentally changes the character and appearance of the existing bungalow to a large two storey house with a maximum height of 10m, including a ground level to soffit maximum height of 5.6m and a soffit to ridge height of 4.4m.
5. This major increase in bulk and massing across the full extent of the existing bungalow and its effect on the appearance of the building from the public realm would be further exacerbated by the proposed two storey height of the front extension. This increase in height would draw attention to its off-centre position which is not particularly noticeable in the existing single storey form of the front gable. This is an adverse effect on the design, because a building of

the imposing size and form as now proposed might be reasonably expected to have a symmetrical appearance.

6. I am less concerned with the proposals and increase in scale to the rear because the building's position and setting would not enable this to be seen from the road or any other part of the public realm. However as regards the front, although the building's principal elevation would be set back from the entrance by a minimum of about 23m and against rising land levels, I consider that a dwelling of this size, including in particular the additional 3.8m height to the existing, would draw the eye. And in attracting this attention it would be likely to be perceived as being over-dominant on its site and out of keeping with the character and appearance of Curley Hill Road.
7. I recognise that following several decades of alterations and extensions to the buildings in Curley Hill Road, the surroundings now have a wide variety of dwelling types, sizes and designs. In this regard I have noted the references in the grounds of appeal to other dwellings in the area and to an appeal decision. However, to the extent that these factors can be argued to support the appeal scheme, they are clearly outweighed by the policy framework that the Council has referenced in its decision.
8. In particular, Principle 10.1 of the Council's Residential Design Guide SPD 2017 says that '*Extensions will be expected to be subordinate and consistent with the form, scale and architectural style & materials of the original building. Developments that are over-dominant or out of keeping will be resisted*'. Principle B3 of the Lightwater Village Design Statement SPD 2007 includes the requirement that '*Extensions should maintain the style, balance and character of the existing building*'.
9. As with most development proposals the interpretation and application of design guidance is subjective. Nonetheless, I consider that the appeal scheme is in particularly clear conflict with these objectives and that this is illustrated by any reasonable comparison between the existing and proposed built form on the site. The appeal scheme would replace the existing unassuming suburban dwelling that sits comfortably within its verdant setting with an overly dominant and bulky building of a formal 'mansion style' design that would be harmful to the character and appearance of its surroundings and the street scene.
10. Accordingly, I find that the proposal would conflict with the aforementioned design guidance and more generally with Policy DM9 of the 'Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies Document' 2021 and with Government policy in the National Planning Policy Framework December 2024.
11. For these reasons and having had regard to all other matters raised, the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR