
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 March 2025

by **C Coles MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 16th April 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/R3650/W/24/3351893

23A Liphook Road, Haslemere, Surrey GU27 1NL

- 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 Christopher Hammonds against the decision of Waverley Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is WA/2024/00804.
 - The development proposed is described as 'change of use of the site to C3 (residential) and associated alterations to form a one-bedroom dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. As part of their statement, the appellant has provided a set of revised plans showing the addition of a window and two rooflights. These amendments represent a fundamental change to the scheme and my acceptance of the revised plans could prejudice interested parties by depriving them of the opportunity to make comments. As such, my decision is based on the plans considered by the Council.
3. The decision notice refers to Parking Guidance (2012). However, I have been provided with the Waverley Borough Council Parking Guidelines (2013). The Council has confirmed this is what it based its decision on, and my determination of this appeal is made on the same basis.

Main Issues

4. The main issues are the effect of the proposal on:
 - the character and appearance of the surrounding area;
 - the living conditions of the occupiers of 23 Liphook Road with particular regard to outlook within their external amenity space;
 - whether the proposed development would provide acceptable living conditions for its occupants with regard to outlook, daylight, sunlight and outdoor amenity space; and
 - whether the proposal makes adequate provision for car parking and on-site cycle parking.

Character and appearance

5. The appeal site comprises a single storey attached garage which has previously been used for retail, situated amongst two-storey mainly residential development of varying age and design. The rear of the garage abuts the rear garden of 23 Liphook Road. There is a small area to the front of the garage which allows for pedestrian access from the pavement. A walkway is located to the unattached side of the garage. On-street parking restrictions apply directly outside the site.
6. The proposal is for the demolition of the existing garage and the erection of a two-storey, gable ended one-bedroom dwelling with a first floor Juliet balcony. The proposed development is of a design and materials similar to neighbouring properties. The development would be built up to the site boundaries on two sides with limited space to the front providing the only outdoor space for the property. The space to the unattached side narrows to the rear and is not wide enough to be usable. No parking is provided for cars or bicycles.
7. The proposed development would be located on an uncharacteristically small and constrained plot. The two-storey dwelling would appear cramped on the site and incongruous with the prevailing character of the street which consists of buildings which generally occupy more spacious plots with space to the boundaries. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the surrounding area. It would conflict with Policies TD1 of the Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 1: Strategic Policies and Sites (2018) (Part 1) and Policy H2 of the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan (2021) (NP) in so far as they seek to ensure development responds to the local context.

Outdoor amenity space for the occupiers of 23 Liphook Road

8. The garden for 23 Liphook Road forms the rear boundary of the appeal site. The two-storey height and solid brick gable end of the proposed development directly on the rear boundary would have an oppressive and dominating appearance when viewed by the occupiers of 23 Liphook Road from their rear garden and would significantly harm their outlook. Accordingly, I conclude the proposed development would conflict with Policy TD1 of Part 1 and Policies DM1 and DM4 of Waverley Borough Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations and Development Management Policies (March 2023) (Part 2) insofar as they seek to safeguard the amenities of neighbouring properties.

Living conditions of the occupiers of the proposed dwelling

9. The proposed dwelling would have windows on the front elevation serving the living room on the ground floor and bedroom on the first floor. A high-level side window would serve the bathroom to the rear of the first floor. No windows would serve the kitchen which would need to rely upon borrowed light from the window at the front of the building. The depth of the building and the lack of windows to habitable rooms at the rear of the property would leave the proposed occupiers with a dark and oppressive living space with no outlook from the rooms to the rear.

10. No private outdoor amenity space is provided on-site and amenity space elsewhere would not be private to the occupants of the proposed dwelling. The appellant has suggested the area to the front of the dwelling could be utilised as amenity space and could be made more private with planting. However, this area is already constrained in size with no space for planting, fronts a busy road and is where the bins are proposed to be located. Accordingly, I conclude the proposed development would be contrary to Policy TD1 of Part 1 and Policy DM5 of Part 2 which seek to improve the quality of life for future residents.

The provision of parking for cars and bicycles

11. No car or cycle provision would be provided on-site and there are parking restrictions on Liphook Road. Despite no objections from Surrey County Council Highway Authority, the car and cycle provision does not conform with the Council Parking Guidelines referred to within Policy ST1 of Part 1 which require one space for a one-bedroom house in a town centre location. At the time of my site visit (midday) there was no available on-street parking outside the appeal site and pressure on the highway network will only increase as residents return home from work. There would be insufficient space to the front of the dwelling or within the hall to store a bicycle. Accordingly, I conclude the proposed development would conflict with Policy ST1 of Part 1 as it does not make appropriate provision for car and cycle parking.

Other Matters

12. Meeting the Nationally Described Space Standard is not sufficient on its own to ensure satisfactory living conditions for the occupants of the proposed development, as the accommodation needs to be of an appropriate standard in terms of natural light and quality of external amenity space.
13. The proposal would contribute to the supply of smaller homes. Although Policy H2 of the NP recognises the importance of such delivery, it states parking should not be compromised in order to meet the need for higher density development and that development should respect the character of the local area. The proposal would not comply with these criteria and as such it would not be supported under the policy.
14. In support of the appeal, my attention was drawn to the houses opposite which the appellant asserts have no garden space and to the houses next door which have very limited garden space to the front or balconies. I have not been provided with the details of these properties to assess whether they are comparable developments, but from my site visit they appeared to be flatted developments which had on-site parking and the potential for outdoor amenity space. Without full details of the circumstances of each property I cannot be sure they represent a direct parallel to the appeal proposal. In any case, I have determined the appeal on its own merits.

Planning Balance

15. The proposal would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area and the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. It would also fail to provide a satisfactory living environment for future occupants and adequate car and cycle parking. In combination, these harms would bring the scheme into conflict with the development plan taken as a whole.
16. The development plan policies which are most important for determining the application are consistent with paragraph 135 of the Framework, insofar as it seeks to secure new development that is sympathetic to local character and a high standard of amenity for existing and future users. I have therefore attached significant weight to the policy conflicts.
17. It is common ground that the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing sites. The Council advises that the current supply is 3.5 years. Paragraph 11 (d) (ii) of the Framework is therefore engaged. This states that, in circumstances where the requisite housing land supply cannot be demonstrated, permission should be granted unless any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole, having particular regard to key policies for directing development to sustainable locations, making effective use of land, securing well-designed places and providing affordable homes, individually or in combination.
18. The proposal would provide social benefits by delivering a small dwelling in an accessible location, there would also be economic benefits, both during construction and in the subsequent occupation phase, but these would be very modest due to the scale of the development. However, the adverse impacts identified above would significantly and demonstrably outweigh these benefits. As such, the proposal would not constitute a sustainable form of development in terms of the Framework.

Conclusion

19. The material considerations do not indicate a decision otherwise than in accordance with the development plan. For the above reasons, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

C Coles

INSPECTOR