



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 April 2025

by **N Bromley BA (Hons) DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 13 MAY 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/W/24/3350686

114 Longacre, Ash, Surrey GU12 6RR

- 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 Zainab and Mr Rahib against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 23/P/01412.
 - The development proposed is described as “Erection of 2Bed-4Person new house with associated amenity space, parking, cycle and refuse storage, new drop kerb for host dwelling #114
 - Longacre, demolition of single storey side extension”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues are the effect of the proposed development on:
 - the character and appearance of the area; and
 - the living conditions of the neighbouring occupiers of 115 Longacre, with regard to outlook and loss of sunlight.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The appeal site comprises the side garden of 114 Longacre (the host property), a two storey semi-detached house, within a residential area. The side garden has a triangular shape and with the garden of 115 Longacre (No 115) it forms a large gap within the street scene.
4. The street scene is primarily characterised by semi-detached dwellings that largely have a uniform appearance. Each pair of semi-detached dwellings are well spaced and are set back from the road behind front gardens, with frontage hedges. Overall, this gives the area a pleasant, spacious, and formal character and appearance.
5. The proposal would result in the loss of a large section of the side garden of the host property, adding an additional dwelling to the existing semi-detached dwellings, creating a terrace block of three dwellings. As a result, although the proposal would mirror the design and size of the host property, a block of three dwellings would be at odds with the uniform character of semi-detached dwellings within the street scene.

6. Due to the size constraints of the site and its triangular plot shape, the built form and mass of an additional dwelling would appear cramped within the site. Consequently, the proposal would sit uncomfortably within the street scene and appear discordant.
7. Furthermore, the increased mass and bulk of the proposal, which would occupy a prominent position within the street scene, on a bend in the road, would be overly dominant from certain vantage points along the road. Likewise, it would reduce the spacious appearance of the site and although the side garden of No 115 would ensure that a gap between the two buildings would be maintained, the space would be markedly reduced. Therefore, even within the context of the smaller gaps between other existing properties in the area, the proposal would be harmful to the spacious appearance of the street scene.
8. Reference has been made to previous planning applications also for new dwellings at 124 and 128 Longacre. It is suggested that the appeal scheme is an improvement compared to the designs of those proposals which were previously refused by the Planning Authority. However, very limited information has been provided and a proper comparison has therefore not been possible. Accordingly, as I am required to do, I have determined the case before me on its own merits.
9. For the reasons outlined above, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the area. It would therefore conflict with the design aims of Policy D1 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan: Strategy and Sites, 2015-2034, and Policies D4 and D8 of Guildford Borough Local Plan: Development Management Policies adopted 22 March 2023 (the DMP) which together and amongst other things seek high quality design that responds positively to the existing character and identity of the local area, respecting building patterns and plots sizes.

Living conditions

10. The appeal site and No 115 occupy a corner plot position within the street scene. The orientation of No 115 is at a right angle to the host property, and the two properties have a generous amount of land around them.
11. The orientation of No 115 and its spacious side and rear garden would ensure that an adequate separation distance between the two buildings would be achieved. As a result, despite its large footprint and two storey height, the proposal would not result in a significant overbearing effect on the outlook from the rear windows, conservatory and garden of No 115.
12. Furthermore, due to the orientation of No 115 and its rear garden, as well as its juxtaposition with the proposal, and the adequate separation distances between the two buildings, the proposed development would not cause a significant reduction in sunlight to the rear garden, conservatory and the windows of habitable rooms of No 115.
13. For the above reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would not harm the living conditions of the occupiers of 115 Longacre, with regard to outlook and loss of sunlight. As such, the proposed development would accord with Policy D5 of the DMP, which seeks development that avoids having an unacceptable impact on the living environment of existing residential properties in terms of, amongst other things, visual dominance, overbearing effects and access to daylight.

Other Matters

14. The Council's third reason for refusal refers to the effect of the proposal on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA), protected pursuant to the Conservation of Habitats Regulations 2017. Had I found no harm in respect of the main issues, as competent authority I would have carried out an Appropriate Assessment in respect of the potential effects of the proposal on the SPA. However, as I have found that permission should be refused for other reasons, this matter need not be considered any further in this case.
15. The site represents a windfall site that can be delivered quickly to assist housing delivery in the area. The proposed development would also contribute to boosting the supply of new housing, as referenced in the Framework, in an area with good access to services and facilities. It would also make efficient use of an underutilised area of the site and the new dwelling could be constructed to achieve high environmental standards. There would also be social and economic benefits to local services during the construction and occupancy phases without conflict with neighbouring land uses. However, these benefits would be limited by virtue of the proposal only adding one additional dwelling to the housing supply in the area.
16. No objections have been raised with regards to access and parking arrangements, or the living conditions of future occupiers but these are requirements of planning policy and taken together they are neutral matters that carry limited weight.
17. Taking the above matters into consideration, and notwithstanding my conclusions on living conditions, the benefits would not outweigh the identified harm that would be caused to the character and appearance of the area.

Conclusion

18. Overall, the proposed development conflicts with the development plan when read as a whole and there are no material considerations, either individually or in combination, that outweigh the identified harm and associated development plan conflict.
19. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

N Bromley

INSPECTOR