
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 October 2025

by **C Shearing BA (Hons) MA MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 7 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/Q3630/W/25/3372135

20 Pinewood Grove, New Haw, Surrey KT15 3BU

- 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 S Olekszy against the decision of Runnymede Borough Council.
 - The application ref is RU.25/0741.
 - The development proposed is described as 'demolition of garage and erection of a new double storey dwelling'.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matters

2. A Unilateral Undertaking (UU) dated 16 June 2025 has been submitted, which relates to financial contributions for mitigation for effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). This has been taken into account in the determination of the appeal.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are: the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area, and; whether the proposal would provide suitable outdoor amenity space for both the existing and proposed dwellings.

Reasons

Character and Appearance

4. The properties on Pinewood Grove are varied in their character and appearance but share a broadly consistent front building line and front gardens of similar size, characterised by combinations of hard surfacing and planting. Together these attributes give a relatively spacious and verdant character to this part of Pinewood Grove and a regular rhythm of built forms.
5. No.20 is a semi-detached bungalow set within a spacious corner plot which is mirrored at no.18. Despite their boundary treatments these side gardens give a sense of openness around the junction with Eden Close and allow views towards the houses on Eden Close behind, contributing positively to the character of the area. The junctions around the nearby cul-de-sacs of Inglehurst and Holmfield Place are more tightly enclosed by the side elevations of adjoining properties. Holmfield Place, however, is a narrow road serving a development of distinctly modern properties behind, and Inglehurst maintains a sense of openness around

the junction due to the receding roofslopes of the adjoining bungalow and grass verges.

6. The proposal would result in the loss of the spacious plot of no.20, heavily diluting the feelings of openness around the junction and this part of the road. The proposed dwelling, due to its proximity to the edge of Eden Close, together with its large side dormer and the introduction of a new principal elevation to this part of Eden Close, would appear visually prominent and incongruous with the established character and pattern of development in the area.
7. For these reasons in combination, the proposal would cause harm to the character and appearance of the area. It would conflict with Policy EE1 of the Runnymede Local Plan 2020 (the LP) which requires high quality design which responds to local context. It would also conflict with the Runnymede Design Supplementary Planning Document 2021 (the SPD) which requires, among other things, that development must respond to the plot and building rhythm within the local context.

Amenity Space

8. Policy EE1 of the LP requires that developments provide an appropriate standard of amenity space and ensure no adverse impacts on occupiers of the proposal or neighbouring property. The SPD states in these areas a minimum garden length of 11m is normally expected for housing, to allow sufficient space for a variety of different activities including outdoor play, drying clothes and storage.
9. No.20 would continue to have two bedrooms, and, despite falling short of the SPD standard, its rear garden would provide a reasonably private space capable of accommodating activities, and it would be proportionate to the size of the dwelling. In contrast, the proposed new dwelling would have three bedrooms, and its rear garden would be limited further due to the rear parking space, cycle and refuse store and the need for access to them. In combination these factors result in a rear garden which would be unlikely to provide quality outdoor space for the purposes described in the SPD. While the new house would also have a front garden, this would be enclosed by the footpath edge as well as the new parking bay of no.20. In combination those features would also severely limit the ability of that space to provide quality outdoor space for future occupiers.
10. For the reasons given, the proposal would fail to provide appropriate amenity space for the occupants of the proposed dwelling and it would conflict with Policy EE1 of the LP and the SPD summarised above.

Other Matters

11. The appellant refers to an extant planning permission for a side extension to no.20. While such an extension would similarly reduce the spaciousness of the plot I have not been provided with details of that permission and cannot be satisfied that its visual effects would be similar, or worse than, this appeal scheme. However, neither would such a development be subject to the same considerations in terms of amenity space. As such it does not provide a reason to alter the above judgement.
12. The Council's third reason for refusing planning permission related to the effects of the development on the Thames Basin Heaths SPA. However, Regulation 63(1) of the Habitats Regulations indicates the requirement for an Appropriate Assessment

is only necessary where the competent authority is minded to give consent for the proposal. As the appeal is being dismissed on other grounds it is not therefore necessary to address this in further detail. For the benefit of the balancing exercise below I have assumed this matter is capable of resolution.

13. Although there is little evidence before me surrounding the Council's housing land supply and delivery, I note the Council refer to the application of the tilted balance. In applying the provisions of paragraph 11d)ii) of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would be the harm to the character of the area and failure to provide suitable outdoor space for the new three bedroom dwelling. The effects of those harms would be significant and long lasting, and would conflict with paragraphs 129, 135 and 139 of the Framework which relate to maintaining an area's prevailing character, sympathy for the local character, providing healthy places and the use of local design policies. These harms attract substantial weight.
14. The benefits of granting planning permission would include the contribution of a new dwelling to the local housing supply. It would also contribute towards the national objective to boost the supply of homes and would be located in an established built up area with good access to services and facilities including sustainable travel options in accordance with paragraphs 110 and 115 of the Framework. There would also be some economic benefits arising from the construction process and ongoing expenditure into the local economy by future occupants. However, these benefits would be limited due to the scale of the development and together the benefits attract moderate weight, based on the information before me.
15. Where the proposal would be acceptable in other respects these are neutral matters and do not weigh in favour of the development. A self-build CIL exemption form has been completed, however there is no other suggestion or certainty that the proposal would be developed for this purpose. As such I give this factor limited weight.
16. Overall, the adverse impacts of granting planning permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole and having regard to the relevant key policies in the Framework. The proposal would not, therefore, benefit from the presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Conclusion

17. The proposal would conflict with the development plan and there are not material considerations of sufficient weight which indicate a decision should be made other than in accordance with it. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

C Shearing

INSPECTOR