



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 October 2025

by **Nicola Davies BA DipTP MRTPI**

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State

Decision date: 10 November 2025

Appeal Ref: APP/D3640/D/25/3373030

21 Heronscourt, Lightwater, SURREY GU18 5SW

- 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 and Mrs Houlberg against the decision of Surrey Heath Borough Council.
 - The application Ref is 25/0581/FFU.
 - The development proposed is the erection of part single part two storey front and side extensions following demolition of existing garage, conversion of loft to create habitable accommodation with roof lights, installation of solar panels and air source heat pump with changes to fenestration and landscaping.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. The main issues raised by this appeal are the effect of the proposed development on: -
 - a) The character and appearance of the host property and the street scene; and
 - b) The living conditions of the adjoining occupiers at No.23 Heronscourt.

Reasons

Character and appearance

3. The Residential Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and the Lightwater Village Design Statement SPD provide guidance for extensions to maintain the style, balance and character of the existing building, to be sympathetic in scale to the character to adjoining properties and the street scene, to respect the spacious character of residential areas and to resist extensions that would erode gaps that contribute to visual amenity and character, amongst other matters. To my mind these documents set out appropriate design principles for achieving acceptable designs for extensions to dwellings within the Borough that align with development plan policy that seeks to achieve high quality design.
4. The proposal would create a large extension to the side of the dwelling. Being of the size proposed, along with its forward siting of the host dwelling and continuation of the ridge line, it would not represent a subservient addition to the host dwelling. The width and overall size of the front gable would compound the disproportionately large appearance of the development and its incoherent design

within the context of the host property. Given the elevated siting of the host dwelling within the street scene, this would further compound the visually dominating appearance of such a large addition to the host dwelling, despite the dwelling being set back from the highway.

5. There is a sense of spaciousness to the area with gaps between dwellings and over single storey elements within the estate. This provides views of trees behind dwellings that is a visually pleasing aspect of this residential estate. By extending the proposal at first floor to the side this would diminish the spaciousness to the character and appearance of this estate and would reduce the views of the trees behind that are presently clearly visible. The loss of spaciousness to this part of the estate would be visually harmful and would be particularly noticeable within the street scene given the elevated siting of the host dwelling.
6. I have been referred to a number of other properties within Heronscourt whereby two-storey extensions have been granted planning permission in the past, photographs of which have been provided. It is contended that the proposed side extension would be similar to those that have taken place at Nos 17, 33 and 35. Those extensions have created large properties with little or no separation to side boundaries. The local planning authority has analysed those examples highlighted by the appellant and from this it would appear that some of those examples either predated the current development plan and were therefore subject to different policy considerations or were considered to comply with the objectives of current development plan policies and guidance. Notwithstanding the other two-storey extensions that may have taken place, even if their original construction reflects the design of the appeal property before me, this proposal can and should be considered on its own individual merits taking into consideration the context of this site.
7. Turning to the proposed single storey extension, this would be of considerable size in itself and would have a prominent and elevated siting forward of the host property. This would be a visually dominant feature in front of the property, as well as being extremely visible within the street scene, particularly on the approach to the property along Heronscourt. This would represent a further visually harmful development at the site. Whilst I saw there to be other examples of forward sited garages within this estate that have also been highlighted to me, none appeared to be of the size and visual prominence of that proposed here.
8. Consequently, taking these matters collectively the proposed side addition and forward extension would be visually harmful to the host property and the street scene. Whilst I accept that other properties within the estate have been extended and that the appellant seeks to achieve a high quality design using materials that would match that of the host dwelling, these matters do not overcome my above concerns.
9. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the character and appearance of the host property and the street scene. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012, Principles 10.1, 10.2 and 10.3 of the Residential Design Guide SPD 2017, Principles B3 and B8 of the Lightwater Village Design Statement SPD 2007 and the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies and SPDs seek, amongst other

matters, development to achieve high quality design by respecting and enhancing local character.

Living conditions

10. The occupiers of neighbouring properties should reasonably expect to enjoy an acceptable outlook as part of their residential lives. No.23 Heronscourt has a wide and large garden. Nonetheless, the flank elevation of the proposed side extension would be sited extremely close to the rear garden and would be extremely prominently visible in the outlook of the adjoining occupiers. The two-storey flank elevation in such close proximity to the neighbouring property would have a visually overbearing impact such that would diminish the enjoyment of the residential living environment and particularly that of the outdoor amenity space. This would harm the enjoyment the existing occupiers should reasonably expect to enjoy. The existing fence is not of sufficient height to obviate the harm that I have identified.
11. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposed development would be harmful to the living conditions of the adjoining occupiers at No.23 Heronscourt. The proposal would, therefore, conflict with Policy DM9 of the Surrey Heath Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2012, Principles 10.1 and 10.3 of the Residential Design Guide SPD 2017 and provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. These policies and SPD seek, amongst other matters, development to respect amenities of occupiers of neighbouring property with the guidance setting out that householder extensions should not result in loss of amenity as a result of being overbearing.

Other Matters

12. I note that the Council has referred to the emerging Local Plan in its reasons for refusal. It is clear that Plan is advancing. However, that Plan could be subject to change. As a consequence, I give little weight to Policy DH1 cited in the Council's reasons for refusal.
13. An interested third party offers support for the proposed development and no objections were received during the course of the local planning authority's consideration of the planning application. The introduction of air source heat pumps would reduce the property's reliance on non-renewable energy sources. Whilst these may be merits of the proposed development they do not overcome my above concerns or justify the proposed development.

Conclusion

14. Having regard to the above findings, the appeal should be dismissed.

Nicola Davies

INSPECTOR