
Appeal Decision

Site visits made on 19 September and 10 October 2016

by Christa Masters MA (hons) MRTPI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 11 October 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/A3655/D/16/3154257

Aaron House, 20 Broomhall Road, Horsell, Woking GU21 4AP

- The appeal is made under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 against a refusal to grant planning permission.
 - The appeal is made by Mr Huxstep against the decision of Woking Borough Council.
 - The application Ref PLAN/2016/0392, dated 5 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 1 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is extension and conversion of the roof space of the existing detached garage.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for extension and conversion of the roof space of the existing detached garage at Aaron House, 20 Broomhall Road, Horsell, Woking GU21 4AP in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref PLAN/2016/0392, dated 5 April 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than 3 years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plan 2589-P01b.
 - 3) The materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing dwelling.

Main Issues

2. Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Wheatsheaf Conservation Area. Secondly, the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the existing and future occupiers of White Pines.

Reasons

Whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the Wheatsheaf Conservation Area

3. Broomhall Road is an established residential area within the Wheatsheaf Conservation Area. The road is characterised by substantial dwellings set in generous plots with dense vegetation in a number of the front gardens. There is a variety in the positioning of dwellings within the individual plots. The proposal would involve a modest extension to the existing detached garage.
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The works would include the formation of accommodation on the first floor and the addition of a number of windows as a result.

4. The Council contend that the proposal would result in a garage which would fail to be subservient to the adjoining property, White Pines. This is the neighbouring dwelling which is a substantial sized property sitting in a prominent corner plot. It has a large front garden and driveway and the dwelling itself extends almost the entire width of the plot.
5. The works proposed as part of the appeal are modest in scale and form and effect the garage building only. The eaves and ridge height of the garage would not alter as a result of the appeal proposal. Although the works would bring the building line of the garage further towards the street, the existing dense vegetation evident along this boundary as well as the angled nature of the plot both mean that the garage would not become unduly prominent within the overall street scene, or reduce the sense of subservience between the garage and the main dwelling or the neighbouring property, White Pines.
6. The Council also contend the proposal would result in an insubordinate and inappropriate form of development and that the introduction of windows would increase the prominence of this structure. Given the secluded nature of the properties along Broomhall Road, I am unable to agree that this would be the case. Furthermore, the provision of windows on a garage building in the circumstances of this appeal, would not increase the prominence of the building.
7. I therefore conclude on the first main issue, the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. It would, as a result, accord with policies CS20 and CS21 of the Core Strategy (CS) 2012. Policy CS20 advises that new development must respect and enhance the character and appearance of the area. Policy CS21 advises, amongst other things, that new development should respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and the character of the area. My attention has also been drawn to policies DM17 and DM20 in the emerging Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD). However, as these policies are yet to be adopted, the weight which I can attach to them is limited.
8. Taking the above into account, the proposal would therefore be consistent with paragraph 132 of the Framework which anticipates that great weight should be given to the conservation of heritage assets. For these reasons, I conclude that the proposal would preserve the character and appearance of the Conservation Area, in accordance with section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

The effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the existing and future occupiers of White Pines

9. I was able to view the appeal site from the neighbouring property White Pines. There is existing dense vegetation which runs along the boundary between the appeal site and White Pines. This vegetation means that the views of the existing garage building are limited from this property.
10. The existing windows in the flank elevation of White Pines facing the appeal site are already restricted in terms of outlook and the level of light they receive by the dense and tall vegetation along this boundary. The extension proposed

to the garage is domestic and modest in scale, and would not increase the height of the roof. Whilst the outlook may alter, I have taken into account the scale and nature of the appeal proposal, as well as the separation distances involved and dense vegetation cover in place. I am unable to agree that the modest extension proposed to the garage would result in a significant harmful impact to the living conditions of the existing and future occupiers of White Pines.

11. For these reasons I therefore conclude on the second main issue, the proposal would have an acceptable effect on the living conditions of the existing and future occupiers of White Pines. It would, as a result, accord with policy CS21 of the CS. This policy advises, amongst other things, that new development should achieve a satisfactory relationship to adjoining properties avoiding significant harmful impacts in terms of privacy and overbearing effect due to bulk. Reference has also been made to the Woking Local Development Framework SPD, 2008. However, my attention has not been drawn to anything specific within this document which would alter the conclusions I have reached above on the main issues before me.

Conditions

12. A standard condition limiting the life of the permission is necessary. I also agree that it is necessary to specify the approved plan as this provides certainty. In the interests of character and appearance, I have also included a condition to require the materials proposed to be used on the extension hereby permitted to match the existing materials.

Conclusion

13. I therefore conclude that having considered all matters raised, the appeal should be allowed.

Christa Masters

INSPECTOR