
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 13 December 2016

by Alex Hutson MATP CMLI MArborA

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

Decision date: 19 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/16/3163518

204 Ember Lane, East Molesey KT8 OBS

- 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 David Wickens against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/2824, dated 26 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 24 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is rear roof extension incorporating rear dormer window, front roof lights and 0.3m increase in ridge height.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for rear roof extension incorporating rear dormer window, front roof lights and 0.3m increase in ridge height at 204 Ember Lane, East Molesey KT8 OBS in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 2016/2824, dated 26 August 2016, subject to the following conditions:
 - 1) The development hereby permitted shall begin not later than three years from the date of this decision.
 - 2) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: Site Location Plan at scale 1:1250; Existing Plans Rev A;; Existing Elevations Rev A; Site Block Plan at scale 1:500; Proposed Plans Rev A; Proposed Elevations Rev A; Proposed First Floor Plan Rev A; Proposed Loft Floor Plan Rev A; and Proposed Section Rev A.
 - 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 building.

Preliminary matter

2. I have taken the description of the proposed development from the Council's decision notice as this provides a more comprehensive and accurate description than that provided on the application form.

Main issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the area.
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Reasons

4. The appeal property is a detached, two storey dwelling located within a wider residential area. Dwellings in the area tend to be tightly spaced and display a variety of architectural styles and a variety of roof forms. I also observed that there is little consistency in the appearance of the rear elevations and rear roof forms of dwellings along this side of Ember Lane.
5. The proposal seeks consent to raise the ridge of the appeal property by approximately 0.3m (metres) and to incorporate a rear roof dormer and front roof lights.
6. The Council acknowledges that the proposed increase in ridge height would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the appeal property and area. Given the existing variety of roof forms in the area and that the increase in ridge height would be modest, I would concur with the Council on this matter. The Council also raises no specific concerns in respect of the proposed front roof lights. These would project a minimal amount from the front roof slope and would reflect the appearance of other such roof lights in the area. As such, they would also respect the character and appearance of the appeal property and area.
7. Given the tight spacing of dwellings along this part of Ember Lane, the proposed rear dormer would be barely visible from the public realm. In addition, it would be set back 0.5m from the eaves and 0.2m from the sides. Given these setbacks, it would display a subordinate relationship with the appeal property, notwithstanding its overall height and width. Moreover, it would be constructed from materials to match the existing roof and the windows would be positioned to reflect the positioning of windows below. In any views from neighbouring gardens, it would be seen within the context of the existing variety of rear elevations and roof forms and would be partially obscured by the roof of an existing rear outrigger. Consequently, I consider that the scale, siting and design of the proposed rear dormer would respect the character and appearance of the appeal property and wider area.
8. Whilst the Council states that rear roof dormers are not prevalent in the area, this is not a sufficient reason to withhold planning permission for a proposal that would otherwise accord with the relevant policies of the development plan. Moreover, when walking around the area, I observed that other rear roof dormers do exist, including a large rear roof dormer at 94 Esher Road, a very short distance to the north of the appeal property. This rear roof dormer is clearly visible from public vantage points along Broadfields.
9. I therefore conclude that the proposal would respect the character and appearance of the appeal property and area and would comply with Policies CS7- East and West Molesey and CS17- Local Character, Density and Design, of the Elmbridge Core Strategy 2011; and Policy DM2- Design and Amenity, of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan 2015. These policies require, amongst other things, development to respect the local character of the area.
10. The proposal would also comply with the guidance of the Council's Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Home Extensions 2012 (SPD). The SPD advises, amongst other things, extensions in general to achieve an appropriate relationship with the existing house and in

respect of roof dormers specifically, not to dominate the roof and to be set back from the eaves.

Other matters

11. I acknowledge the concerns of the occupiers of 202 Ember Lane in respect of privacy. However, the Council conclude that the proposal would not result in a significantly greater level of overlooking than the current situation. Based on the evidence before me and my own observations, I have no substantive reasons to take a different view on this matter.

Conditions

12. I have had regard to the conditions suggested by the Council. In addition to the statutory time limit condition, a condition specifying the relevant drawings is necessary as this provides certainty. I also agree that a condition relating to materials is necessary in the interests of character and appearance.

Conclusion

13. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

Alex Hutson

INSPECTOR