The Planning Inspectorate

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 December 2016

by R J Maile BSc FRICS

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

Decision date: 19 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/16/3159399
21 Summer Gardens, East Molesey, Surrey, KT8 9LT.

- 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 Phillip Woods against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
- The application ref: 2016/1205, dated 13 April 2016, was refused by notice dated 13 July 2016.
- The development proposed is: "First floor side extension, raising of external walls and new roof with side dormer window and rooflights."

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue here is the effect of the proposed alterations upon the character and appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 21 Summer Gardens comprises a detached two storey cottage that forms part of a run of five similar dwellings which have largely maintained their original appearance. The adjacent large house to the south (no. 20) is of later vintage and of a different design and materials to the cottages to the north. It has a front-facing roof slope and a ridge height some 1.6m above that of no. 21. The adjacent detached cottages to the north are marginally taller than the subject property, but nevertheless retain their 'as built' two storey appearance.

4. The appeal site is not within a Conservation Area or Area of Special Residential Character. The surrounding development is of mixed appearance, as noted during my site visit and referred to in the detailed grounds of appeal. Further afield there are examples of three storey dwellings (18 and 20 Summer Road) and of a cottage (21 Summer Road) that has been enlarged utilising a design similar to that proposed in this instance.

5. The alterations have been carefully designed to reflect the form, fenestration and materials of the existing dwelling, such that the scheme before me reflects the character and appearance of the host building when considered in isolation.

6. Paragraph 60 of the Framework[1] states that planning policies and decisions should not attempt to impose architectural styles or particular tastes and they should not stifle innovation, originality or initiative through unsubstantiated requirements to conform to certain development forms of styles. However, it also states that it is proper to seek to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness.

7. This section of Summer Gardens has a strong identity in terms of the row of cottages with their similar footprints and ridge heights, including no. 23 which would appear to contain some accommodation within the roof space. That symmetry, which is an important element within the street scene, would be lost given the substantial increase in the height and bulk of the dwelling resulting from the combined alterations as proposed. There would also be a significant reduction in the openness that currently exists between the bulky gable end of 20 Summer Gardens and the south flank elevation of the cottage as extended to the further detriment of the appearance of the street scene.

8. I acknowledge that the scheme has been carefully designed to reflect other alterations further afield. I have nevertheless found upon the main issue that, on balance, development as proposed would be harmful to the character and appearance of the surrounding area contrary to the requirements of national policy at Chapter 7 (Requiring good design) of the Framework, to Policy CS17 of the Core Strategy[2] and Policy DM2 of the Local Plan[3].

Conclusion

9. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should fail.

R. J. Maile

INSPECTOR

[1] The National Planning Policy Framework.
[2] The Elmbridge Core Strategy (adopted July 2011).
[3] The Elmbridge Local Plan: Development Management Plan (adopted April 2015).