

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: 21 December 2016

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/16/3158002
18 Wolsey Road, Esher, Surrey, KT10 8NX.

- 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 Mark Harman against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application ref: 2016/0991, dated 18 February 2016, was refused by notice dated 14 June 2016.
 - The development proposed is: "Loft conversion with rear mansard."
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for loft conversion with rear mansard at 18 Wolsey Road, Esher, Surrey, KT10 8NX, in accordance with the terms of the application ref: 2016/0991, dated 18 February 2016, and the plans submitted with it.

Main Issue

2. The main issue here is the impact of the mansard link upon the character and appearance of the host building and that of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. 18 Wolsey Road comprises one of a pair of semi-detached Victorian houses. It is within the Esher Conservation Area and has been identified by the Council as a Significant Unlisted Building ('SUB') in its Character Appraisal undertaken in 2008. For these reasons, I have accorded the property substantial significance within the Conservation Area by reference to national policy at paragraph 129 of the Framework¹.
4. Planning permission was granted in 2015 (ref: 2015/0784) for two small rear-facing dormer windows. As part of the works to create accommodation within the roof space a small mansard roof connecting these two dormer windows has been constructed in matching materials. Those additional works, which permit a more spacious bedroom within the roof void incorporating a shower room/toilet, have been undertaken without the benefit of planning permission.

¹ The National Planning Policy Framework.

5. Having regard to the location of the appeal site within the Esher Conservation Area and the status of the building as a SUB, I have carefully considered the impact of these minor additional works on the host building and the designated area, as required by national policy at Chapter 12 (Conserving and enhancing the historic environment) of the Framework.
6. I have some sympathy with the views of the Council's Conservation Officer, who is rightly concerned that the previously permitted dormers were already at the very limit in proportions that could be regarded as acceptable. She considered that the mansard infill, by creating an apparently single dormer, would be unsympathetic to the character of this small semi-detached property and the wider Conservation Area.
7. Notwithstanding these comments, I noted that the mansard is of very modest proportions. In particular, it is carefully inset from the permitted dormers on either side. These factors, combined with the location of the mansard to the rear of the cottage, its sloping nature and the use of matching materials, have enabled me to conclude that the character and appearance of the host building will be maintained.
8. I now turn to consider the impact of the proposal upon the designated Esher Conservation Area.
9. There are other rear-facing dormers to properties in Wolsey Road and further afield within Conservation Areas in the Borough, details of which have been provided to me.
10. The infill mansard is masked by the adjacent dormer windows in views from the public domain and, given its location to the rear of no. 18, is probably not visible other than from within the garden of the subject property and in very limited views from the back gardens of the immediately adjacent dwellings. As such, the mansard as constructed has resulted in minor harm only to the designated heritage asset.
11. As required by paragraph 134 of the Framework I have carefully weighed this harm against the benefits of providing enhanced living accommodation within the roof space and the care that has been taken to minimise the impact of the mansard infill. On balance, I conclude that in the particular circumstances of this case those benefits outweigh the minor harm I have identified above.
12. For all of these reasons, I find upon the main issue that the mansard infill will not have an unacceptable impact upon the character and appearance of the host building or that of the surrounding area and that the development will accord with national policy in the Framework as referred to above, Policies CS9 and CS17 of the Core Strategy² and Policies DM2 and DM12 of the Local Plan³.

Conditions

13. The development has already been completed, such that no conditions are deemed necessary.

² The Elmbridge Core Strategy (adopted July 2011).

³ The Elmbridge Local Plan: Development Management Plan (adopted April 2015).

Conclusion

14. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed.

R. J. Maile

INSPECTOR