

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 15 December 2016

by D Cramond BSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 06 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/M3645/D/16/3159879

Brambles Cottage, Brassey Road, Oxted RH8 0EU

- 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 Mike Gallagher against the decision of Tandridge District Council.
 - The application Ref TA/2016/853, dated 17 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is the erection of a single storey front extension in association with new roof over existing side extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Procedural Matter

2. I use the Council's description of development which is more precise than the planning application form; I note the Appellant also uses this more complete description of development within the 'Statement of Case'.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality.

Reasons

Character and appearance

4. The appeal property is two storey detached dwelling on a broadly rectangular plot which runs alongside Brassey Road. The property lies parallel to the road. In this locality, which has a pleasing general scene and established character of large detached homes on generous plots with significant front gardens and a verdant air, the appeal property is unusually close to the road. Relatively effective screening is provided by a substantial hedge atop a bank which drops down to the informal and narrow road. The proposal is as described above and would primarily provide for increased living accommodation. The single storey forward projection with a pitched roof upstand ahead of a flat roofed area would run along about two thirds of the front elevation of the appeal property and project out around 3.6 metres.
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5. To my mind the works would neither be in keeping with the design of the original property nor suitably subservient as an extension. The existing front elevation would be overly and detrimentally subsumed by an extension of awkward unbalancing appearance, substantial bulk and with an uncharacteristic approach to roofing. The front garden area, which is already relatively tight and something of an anomaly in this spacious locality, would be excessively consumed by the scheme. Built form would come uncharacteristically too close to the road and an open area suitable for soft landscape would be lost. At the present time the existing hedge would largely shield the scheme from view from the road. However, the decisions on the siting of buildings needs to have regard to the long term and the general local distinctiveness which is apparent and which one senses but is not always directly visible on every site from a public vantage point. The scheme would represent uncharacteristic over-development alongside this stretch of highway which might be described as a 'leafy lane' and would be harmful in that regard.
6. The development sought would lead to aesthetic detriment to the appeal property and the wider locality. I conclude that this would run contrary to policies DP7 of the Tandridge Local Plan Part 2: Detailed Policies and CSP18 of the Tandridge District Core Strategy which share common themes of seeking high quality design to protect or enhance the character and appearance of buildings and their neighbourhood, to ensure harmonious development and the protection of local distinctiveness.

Other matters

7. I do sympathise with the wish for additional accommodation. I have considered the prospect of a planning condition relating to hedge retention. However I am of the view that this would be a difficult practical proposition to monitor and enforce and, in any event, my concerns over character are not merely the pure visual aspect but also the distinctive spatial separation of built development from the road and the scope for significant landscape to the front of properties that this provides. I can see that thought has been given to certain design matters such as the use of matching materials and pitched roofing. I have carefully considered all the points raised by the Appellant but these matters do not outweigh the concerns which I have in relation to the main issue identified above.
8. I confirm that policies in the National Planning Policy Framework have been considered; the Council's policies which I cite mirror relevant objectives within the Framework.

Overall conclusion

9. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal proposal would have unacceptable adverse effects on the character and appearance of the host property and the locality. Accordingly the appeal is dismissed.

D Cramond

INSPECTOR