
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 4 January 2017

by Amanda Blicq BSc (Hons) MA CMLI

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

Decision date: 13 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Z3635/D/16/3157735

38 Vereker Drive, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey TW16 6HF

- 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 C Taylor against the decision of Spelthorne Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00890/HOU, dated 31 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 3 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is proposed two storey rear extension.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for proposed two storey rear extension at 38 Vereker Drive, Sunbury-on-Thames, Surrey TW16 6HF in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/00890/HOU, dated 31 May 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 materials to be used in the construction of the external surfaces of the development hereby permitted shall match those used in the existing building;
 - 3) The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the approved plans: VD/38/01A and VD/38/02A;
 - 4) No further openings of any kind shall be formed in the eastern elevation of the development hereby permitted without the prior written consent of the local planning authority.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the development on the character and appearance of the area.

Reasons

3. The appeal property (No 38) is a detached dwelling with a chalet style frontage, situated on a road of similar dwellings. The Council and the appellant refer in their evidence to 'Berg-style' dwellings but there is no further explanation of what typifies this designation. I noted on my visit that there is an underlying consistency of dormer windows on front roof slopes and half-hipped barn style roofs to the sides, but it was also apparent from the street that most dwellings have had significant extensions to the side and rear.
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4. Number 38 has had a two-storey rear extension with a gable projection on one side of its rear elevation. The development would comprise the addition of a similar gable projection on the other side of the rear elevation. This would replace a large box dormer and a section of a single storey pitched roof projection which runs along No 38's eastern elevation and wraps around the rear corner.
5. To the east of No 38 there is a modest L-shaped bungalow set back from the underlying building line (No 40). As such, the development at No 38 would be visible from the street, whereas the side and rear extensions of other nearby dwellings are largely screened by adjacent structures. However, although there would be an extension at both ground and first floor level, the existing pitched roof projection alongside the garage would be retained, as would the half-hipped roof feature on the side gable. Furthermore, this view of the development would be restricted to one particular viewpoint in the street scene.
6. The Council refers to an original eaves height of 3 metres. Having reviewed the drawings I have concluded that this lower eaves height is restricted to a narrow section of No 38's front roof, which would be unaffected by the development, and the central section of the rear roof. As the rear roof slope contains a bulky and incongruous box dormer above this section of lower eaves height, I am not satisfied that the loss of this section of roof would be detrimental to No 38's appearance at the rear. Furthermore, the proposed eaves height of the development would reflect that of the existing rear projection, and would be lower than the eaves height of the half-hipped side gables.
7. The Council has observed that the development would be obtrusive from Hawke Park to the south. However, No 38 is set some distance back from its rear garden boundary, and I noted on my visit that neighbouring dwellings have had a variety of rear extensions and roof alterations. The development before me would be in keeping with a previous alteration, and would be more sympathetic to the underlying form of the host dwelling than other extensions previously carried out in the area. I also noticed a similar double gable extension under construction on a property on the other side of Hawke Park. Whilst I do not have the details or context of that development before me, I concluded that it was as visible from Hawke Park as the appeal before me.
8. Consequently, although I appreciate that the development would result in No 38's side elevation appearing deeper, there would be limited visibility from the street and the key features of No 38's existing flank wall would be unchanged. At the rear, the development would mirror an existing projection and would replace what appears to be previous piecemeal development, which in itself is unsympathetic to the host dwelling. As such, I conclude that the development would not be detrimental to the character and appearance of the street scene, or the host dwelling.
9. The SPD¹ states that extensions should be well-proportioned and should not overdominate the host building, and Policy EN1 of the Local Plan² (LP) states that development shall respect and make a positive contribution to the street scene and pay due regard to the design characteristics of adjoining buildings.

¹ Spelthorne Borough Council, Design of Residential Extensions and New Residential Development, April 2011

² Spelthorne Borough Council, Core Strategy and Policies, Development Plan Document, adopted February 2009

As reasoned above, the development would retain some key features of the host dwelling and its visibility in the street scene would be limited. As such, I conclude there would be no conflict with LP Policy EN1 or the SPD.

Other matters

10. The Council notes that two previous applications for similar proposals have been refused. However, I have determined this appeal on its own merits.

Conditions

11. I have considered the conditions put forward by the Council against the requirements of the national Planning Practice Guidance and the Framework. In respect of the plans, I have imposed a condition specifying the drawings upon which I have based this appeal, as this provides certainty.
12. I have also imposed a condition requiring the materials to be used to match those used in the existing building in order to safeguard the character and appearance of the area.
13. The Council has suggested a condition requiring the bathroom window on the eastern elevation to be obscure glazed and non-opening. This would be located alongside an existing bedroom window which overlooks the front garden of No 40. However, the Council has not raised any concern in relation to the loss of privacy for occupiers of No 40, as such I am not satisfied that an obscure glazed and non-opening window is required to make the development acceptable in planning terms.
14. I have however imposed a condition restricting the construction of further openings on this elevation in order to ensure works subsequent to this development do not cause an increase in overlooking to No 40's plot.

Conclusion

15. For the reasons given above and taking all matters into account, I conclude that the development would not be contrary to the relevant policies of the Council's Development Plan Document and that therefore the appeal should be allowed.

Amanda Blicq

INSPECTOR