
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 9 January 2017

by Louise Phillips MA (Cantab) MSc MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24 January 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/16/3163794

6 Elmfield Cottages, White Hart Lane, Wood Street Village, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3EA

- 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 Guy Halligan against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/01564, dated 18 July 2016, was refused by notice dated 16 September 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as “a proposal to demolish existing single garage, rear single storey workshop and study extensions and existing side entrance hallway and to construct a two storey side extension. To recover the existing roof with materials to match and provision of a third car parking space”.
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Decision

1. The appeal is allowed and planning permission is granted for a two storey side extension at 6 Elmfield Cottages, White Hart Lane, Wood Street Village, Guildford, Surrey GU3 3EA in accordance with the terms of the application, Ref 16/P/01564, dated 18 July 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 development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the following approved plans: WHL6/03 Revision B; WHL6/04; and WHL6/05.
 - 3) Before the development hereby permitted is occupied, the existing single storey rear extensions shown on submitted plan No WHL6/01 as a workshop and study shall be demolished.
 - 4) The external surfaces of the development hereby permitted, including making good the retained fabric, shall match in material, colour, size, style, bonding, texture and profile, those of the existing building.

Preliminary Matters

2. The description of development in the heading to this decision is taken from the application form. I have amended it in my formal decision at paragraph 1 above so that it is more precise and succinct.

Main Issues

3. The main issues are:

- The effect of the proposed development upon the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area;
- Whether the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt; and
- If the development would be inappropriate, whether the harm to the Green Belt by reason of inappropriate development, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations, so as to amount to the very special circumstances necessary to justify the proposal.

Reasons

Character & Appearance.

4. The appeal property is a two-storey, semi-detached house which has previously been extended to the rear by a two-storey addition and three single storey additions. There is also a single storey detached garage to the side. The proposed development is to construct a two-storey side extension to the property following the removal of the existing garage. Two of the small single storey rear additions would also be removed as part of the scheme.
5. The proposed extension would be a little wider than the existing house and only slightly recessed at first floor level. Thus it could not be described as a subordinate addition. However, whereas the existing garage is sited right on the boundary of the plot, the proposed extension would be set in from it by almost 1m. Given the presence of open land to the immediate west, the development would appear to fit comfortably on the plot without looking cramped. The scale and mass of the two-storey extension would of course be greater than that of the garage to be removed, but that is not, of itself, necessarily detrimental.
6. The extension would be styled to complement the existing house with matching fenestration and the same roof form. The front door would be approximately central. Overall, the form of the resultant dwelling would be coherent and it would not look unbalanced despite the width of the new development.
7. The extended property would be significantly wider than the neighbouring attached house and in this respect it would “unbalance” the semi-detached pair. However, there is nothing remarkable about the design of the existing pair and the other semi-detached properties in the same stretch of White Hart Lane are each of a different style. Consequently, while I acknowledge that the proposed development would not accord with the Council’s general design guidance¹, the extension would not appear incongruous in respect of how it would relate to the host dwelling and its neighbour. Nor would it have any significant impact on the street scene.
8. I therefore conclude that the proposed development would not be harmful to the character and appearance of the host dwelling or wider area. Thus it would not conflict with Policy H9 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 (the Local Plan), which amongst other things, requires that extensions to dwellings in the

¹ Supplementary Planning Guidance: Residential Extensions, 2003, paragraph 3.7.

countryside should not have an unacceptable effect on the scale and character of the dwelling; or the existing context and character of adjacent buildings and immediate surroundings. Nor would it conflict with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) concerning good design.

Whether the proposed development would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

9. The site lies within the Green Belt where, by virtue of paragraph 87 of the Framework, inappropriate development is by definition harmful and should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Paragraph 89 of the Framework states that the extension or alteration of an existing building would not be inappropriate development in the Green Belt, provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. Policy H9 of the Local Plan includes a similar test.
10. In this case, the "original" building is the house minus the existing rear extensions referred to above, but including the garage shown on the plans. Once the two small single storey rear extensions and garage are demolished, the proposed development would increase the floor area of the original building by 49%.
11. Such an increase in floor area would be significant, but paragraph 5.39 of the supporting text to Policy H9 advises that it is not "desirable to state categorically what maximum size of extension...is permissible given the wide range of circumstances to which the policy applies". It goes on to say that the principal consideration will be the potential impact of the extension on the openness and visual amenities of the Green Belt. In this respect, the Council considers that the development would not have a material adverse impact. I agree with this assessment, particularly because the removal of the garage and rear additions would reduce both the overall width and depth of built form upon the site.
12. The proposed extension would be of a greater scale and mass than the individual structures to be removed but, in relation to character and appearance, I have found above that it would not be unduly large. Whilst considerations of "size" are more fundamental in Green Belt terms, my findings nevertheless lead me to conclude that the extension itself would not be disproportionate. Notwithstanding that the older two-storey rear extension would remain along with one of the single storey rear additions, with the removal of the other structures, I am satisfied that the appeal scheme would not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building.
13. Consequently, I conclude that the proposed development would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt. It would not conflict with the relevant requirement of Policy H9 of the Local Plan (or with Policy RE2, which requires extensions to existing dwellings in the Green Belt to be in accordance with Policy H9). Nor would it conflict with the provisions of the Framework concerning Green Belt.
14. Given I have found that the proposal would not constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt, it is not necessary to address the third potential Main Issue of the appeal.

Conclusion and Conditions

15. For the reasons given above, I conclude that the appeal should be allowed. In considering whether conditions should be imposed, I have had regard to the tests in paragraph 206 of the Framework and the advice in the Planning Practice Guidance.
16. I have imposed the standard time limit for the commencement of development, and a condition requiring the development to be carried out in accordance with the approved plans. This is for the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning. Whilst the Council has not requested it, I have included a condition to require that the existing single storey extensions to be removed are demolished before the new development is occupied. This is necessary to ensure that the extensions to the property overall are not of disproportionate size. The condition relating to materials is necessary to protect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and wider area.

Louise Phillips

INSPECTOR