



Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 10 January 2017

by Kevin Gleeson BA MCD MRTPI

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

Decision date: 3 February 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/P3610/D/16/3163331

The Gables, 27 Longdown Lane North, Ewell KT17 3HY

- 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 & Mrs Andy Spinks against the decision of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/00366/FLH, dated 31 May 2016, was refused by notice dated 15 August 2016.
 - The development proposed is described as ground/first floor side and rear extensions and alterations to a house in a conservation area, in-out drive with additional crossover.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue is the effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and whether it would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Higher Green Conservation Area.

Procedural Matter

3. The Council's first reason for refusal makes reference to the effect of the proposed development on The Green/Ewell Down Road Conservation Area. However, the appeal site is located within the Higher Green Conservation Area and I have considered the appeal on that basis.

Reasons

4. The Higher Green Conservation Area encompasses Higher Green and Longdown Lane North. It is a designated heritage asset as defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework). The Conservation Area is entirely in residential use and was developed from the 1920s onwards. Houses within Higher Green demonstrate a degree of uniformity being detached and set within large plots with a common building line. Typically, within the Conservation Area houses include steeply pitched tiled roofs with gables, false timber framing and leaded light windows. Nevertheless properties on the eastern side of Longdown Lane North demonstrate greater variety than those in other parts of the Conservation Area.
 5. Mature trees, hedges and other vegetation including grass verges contribute to the character of the Conservation Area. Front boundary walls are often low
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and backed up by shrubbery which add to the character. In some situations the boundary wall has been replaced with shrubbery, which alongside the grass verge contributes to the landscape setting and a sense of enclosure for gardens.

6. The Framework states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a designated heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. Policy CS5 of the Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy, 2007 (the Core Strategy) aims to protect and enhance heritage assets including conservation areas whilst Policy DM8 of the Development Management Policies Document, 2015 (the DMP) also seeks to conserve and enhance heritage assets. Policy DM8 also states that in determining whether the impact of proposed development is acceptable the significance of the asset will be taken into account.
7. Policy DM9 of the DMP indicates that in conservation areas proposals should make a positive contribution to the visual character and appearance of the area. Policy DM10 of the DMP addresses design requirements. With regard to house extensions it advises that elements contributing to the character and local distinctiveness of a street or area should be respected, maintained or enhanced.
8. The appeal property is a detached two storey house with a sizeable front garden and is fronted by a grass verge. The front elevation of the house has a degree of symmetry with two gable ended pitched roofs at either end of the main hipped roof. A single storey extension incorporating a garage and utility room adjoins the northern elevation. On either side of the house the frontage extends to the boundary with a white rendered wall. The property is identified within the Character Appraisal for the Higher Green Conservation Area as a positive building.
9. The proposal would provide a part two storey and part single storey side extension with a single storey rear extension. To the front the two storey extension would have a hipped roof which would maintain the original ridgeline and the front gabled element would match and align with the two existing gables. Beyond the two storey side extension a new garage is proposed with a flank wall which would extend along the angled boundary. The garage would be set back slightly from the main elevation.
10. Whilst reflecting the character of the existing building in terms of roof profile and gable frontage the proposal would introduce considerable new bulk and massing to the existing building. Being of the same height and extending to the same frontage as the original house the extension would not appear subservient to the original building and would considerably alter the scale of the principal elevation. Whilst the garage would be set back from the front elevation it would extend to cover virtually the entire northern side of the property. Consequently the proposal would cover a significant proportion of the width of the site which would be harmful to the character and appearance of the existing building which contributes positively to the Conservation Area.
11. Through the additional scale and massing the enlarged property would be dominant within the plot. Moreover, it would detract from the setting of the neighbouring building to the north. It would appear intrusive and dominant in the street scene and would therefore fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Higher Green Conservation Area. I therefore find that the

proposed extension would be contrary to Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy and Policies DM8 and DM9 of the DMP in failing to conserve a designated heritage asset and Policy DM10 of the DMP in respect of design. As a result it would also be contrary to the requirements of the Framework in terms of conserving heritage assets and requiring good design.

12. The proposed new crossover to create an in-out driveway would result in a loss of soft landscaping. This would increase the urban appearance of the setting and would reduce the sense of enclosure which the existing shrubbery on the boundary provides. Whilst in-out drives can be found locally they are not extensive within the High Green Conservation Area and most properties have a single simple driveway. The creation of an additional driveway would detract from the setting of the existing building and replacement landscaping would not sufficiently mitigate this impact.
13. I find that the proposed crossover would be harmful to the character and appearance of the Higher Green Conservation Area and therefore the proposal would be contrary to Policy CS5 of the Core Strategy and Policies DM8 and DM9 of the DMP which seek to conserve heritage assets and Policy DM10 of the DMP in respect of design. As a result the requirements of the Framework in terms of conserving heritage assets and requiring good design would not be met.
14. In support of the proposed extension the appellants drew my attention to other properties in the area that have already been extended or have in-out driveways. However, I do not know the full planning history of these cases and nevertheless I have assessed the proposals on their own planning merits.
15. I recognise that the proposals would provide the appellants with further accommodation but this benefit is not sufficient to outweigh the less than substantial harm to the significance of the Higher Green Conservation Area. For these reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Kevin Gleeson

INSPECTOR