
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 14 March 2017

by Patrick Whelan BA(Hons) Dip Arch MA MSc ARB RIBA RTPI

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

Decision date: 10 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/16/3161325

2 St Johns Terrace Road, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6HS

- 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 J McMenamin against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 15/02827/F, dated 14 December 2015, was refused by notice dated 8 July 2016.
 - The development proposed is a two storey extension to provide replacement kitchen to the ground floor flat and covered access to the first floor flat with new bedroom.
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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 building and the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The building the subject of this appeal stands on the corner of two streets, distinctive for the variety of house types and roof forms whose individual order and coherence in their overall arrangement together make an attractive street scene, with a high quality townscape of traditional design and detailing.
 4. The high level roof over the proposed extension, being conspicuously asymmetric, partly hipped and with a relatively shallow pitch, would appear in conflict with the roofscape of the main building which incorporates distinctive, less asymmetric gables rather than hips, and which has a significantly steeper pitch than this proposal. Furthermore, the heads of the first floor windows of the proposal, set at the level of the eaves, would be at odds with the characteristic detailing of the openings of the original building which are generally set a few courses of brickwork below the eaves.
 5. I have given weight to the benefit of the enclosed stairway which would replace the external stair, and the additional accommodation in the proposal. However, I am not convinced that an alternative, more sensitive design could not meet the objective of the proposal, and in any event, the provision does not outweigh the harm identified above.
 6. I have also taken into account the completed extensions to the building, but do not consider that its contribution to the character of the area has been reduced
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to the degree where the harm identified above should be accepted. I acknowledge that the rear elevation of the main building has less bearing on the street scene than its two street frontages, however the harm identified above would be conspicuous in views from St. Johns Road. That the St Johns Road elevation to which the development would be attached may have been originally secondary to the St Johns Terrace Road elevation would not reduce its impact on the character of development in the same street. I note the care taken to avoid disrupting the arrangement of mass in the building and its balance in the street scene; however, it is the scale and design of the individual elements within the proposal rather than the mass which conflicts with the existing building.

7. I appreciate that an architectural language which makes a distinction from the original building is sometimes proposed as an alternative to continuing the established theme, and I note the development at 35 Woodlands Road. However, that extension is relatively narrow and is set substantially back from the front wall of the main building, reducing its prominence. While its roof is hipped and has a shallower pitch than the main, gabled roof, it reflects the symmetry of the main pitch, and its openings share a similar relationship to the eaves as those in the main building.
8. Unlike that example, this proposal has a conflict between its materials and openings which appear to match the original building versus the comparatively demure scale and more asymmetrical arrangement of its roof and the widened ground floor, projecting forward to the line of the existing window bay, which depart from the order and balance in form in the existing building. The proposed development would thus harm the appearance of the host building.
9. I have already acknowledged the variety of roof designs in the area, and the differences between their forms, eaves heights, pitches, and materials. However, what distinguishes them from this proposal is that there is generally a coherence of forms, arrangement, and detailing within each plot which balances the idiosyncrasy of the various townscapes in the area. In this context, the harm identified above would undermine the distinctive townscape and character of development in the area around the site.
10. The proposal would thus conflict with saved Policies Ho9, Ho13, and Ho16 of the Reigate and Banstead Borough Local Plan 2005, which require development to conform to the pattern of development in the surrounding area and to promote or reinforce local distinctiveness. Roofscape is an important element of building which can influence the attractiveness of a place. In this regard the proposal would conflict too with the objectives for good design as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework¹, and with the Planning Practice Guidance², which advises that development should seek to promote character in townscape by responding to and reinforcing locally distinctive patterns of development.

Other Matters

11. I have considered concerns from neighbours including in relation to the loss of light and outlook at 4 St Johns Terrace Road and traffic congestion. However, taking into account the existing structures on-site, the location of No 4 being

¹ National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 58

² Planning Practice Guidance, paragraph 007 Reference ID: 26-007-20140306

directly to the south of this site and the separation between No 4 and the proposed extension, there is no evidence that the change over the existing situation would be materially harmful to the light its occupiers receive or to their outlook. Nor would the additional accommodation be likely to result in additional pressure on the street parking in the surrounding streets.

Conclusion

12. Whilst the proposed development would expand the existing accommodation, this is outweighed by the unacceptable harm it would cause to the appearance of the host building and the character of the surrounding area, which is in clear conflict with the policies of the development plan. For the reasons given above, and taking account of all matters raised, I conclude that the appeal should be dismissed.

Patrick Whelan

INSPECTOR