

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 28 March 2017

by Jonathan Manning BSc (Hons) MA MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/17/3169944

5 Pirbright Terrace, Guildford Road, Pirbright, Woking, GU24 0LR

- 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 Michael Walker against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/P/02227, dated 4 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is part two storey, part single storey rear extension following demolition of existing conservatory.
-

Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue of the appeal is the effect of the proposal on heritage assets.

Reasons

3. The appeal site is located on Guildford Road and accommodates a two-storey semi-detached dwelling. The appeal site falls within the Pirbright Conservation Area. The site also forms part of Pirbright Terrace (the terrace), which is locally listed for its connection to the local history of the village, its landmark quality in townscape terms and its level of architectural detail and style. It was clear from my site visit that the pitched roofs of the properties that form the majority of the terrace, which accommodate quite striking front gable projections, are noticeable features, which contribute heavily to the architectural significance of the non-designated heritage asset.
 4. Whilst noting that the front elevations of some of the properties have been subject to alterations, there does, in my view, remain a certain level of uniformity to the properties. This can also be said for the rear of the terrace. Whilst there have been rear alterations at ground floor level through variously sized extensions and conservatories, with the exception of No 2, there are no noticeable extensions at first floor level or alterations to the roofscape other than some modest rooflights. I consider that this also contributes to the significance of the terrace, particularly as views of the rear of the terrace can be gained from the properties to the east.
 5. The scheme seeks to remove the existing rear conservatory and erect a part two-storey and part single-storey rear extension. In addition, the proposal seeks to convert the loft, which would include a rear dormer window. The
-

proposed extension would span the width of the appeal property at ground floor level and would project by some 6 metres from its rear elevation, beyond the footprint of the existing shared extension and conservatory. Further, at first floor level the extension would be over half the width of the host property and would extend from its rear elevation by approximately 50% of the dwellings current depth. The extension would therefore result in a substantial addition to the host dwelling.

6. Despite the gable end of the first floor part of the extension being set down from the ridge height of the host dwelling, I consider that the combined mass and bulk of the ground floor and first floor parts of the extension would appear overly dominant and not subservient to the host dwelling. Whilst causing harm to the character and significance of the host dwelling in its own right, this would also be detrimental to the rear uniformity of the terrace, particularly at first floor level. This would be exacerbated by the proposed rear dormer window, which would be set on the ridge height of the host dwelling and would therefore be prominent and, in my view, an incongruous feature, given the uncluttered existing rear roofscapes of the properties within the terrace.
7. I acknowledge that the scheme would not be highly visible from the front of the terrace, however, I do consider that glimpsed views of the very deep and large flank wall that would be created on the northern side elevation of the dwelling would be seen between the gap of No 4 and the host property. The unacceptably large scale and bulk of the proposal would therefore, to some degree, be evident from the street scene. In any event, I observed that the proposal would nonetheless be clearly viewed from the existing properties to the east at Cowbridge Meadow and also by the neighbouring properties within the terrace.
8. For all of these reasons, I consider that the proposal would not preserve the character or appearance of the Pirbright Conservation Area¹ and would cause harm to the significance of the locally listed Pirbright Terrace, which is a non-designated heritage asset. I consider that the resulting harm from the scheme to the Conservation Area as a whole and to the non-designated heritage asset would be less than substantial. Consequently, the public benefits of the scheme need to be weighed against the harm. The proposal would result in improved living accommodation for the appellant, but in the absence of any more immediate public benefits, I consider that this is not sufficient to outweigh the identified harm.
9. The appellant has referred to the guidance provided in the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance on Residential Extensions (2003) (the SPG). I accept that some elements of the scheme comply with the guidance provided within the SPG, such as the two-storey part of the extension being set down from the ridge height of the host dwelling and having a gable end to reflect the character of the property. However, the guidance has been taken in isolation, in terms of each element of the proposal. It is the combination of the part two storey, part single storey rear extension and the dormer window that results in a design, scale, mass and bulk that is out of keeping with the host dwelling. Further, the SPG sets out that all extensions should aim to: achieve a design of high quality; complement the size, shape and character of the existing

¹ Section 72 (1) of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservations Areas) Act 1990.

property; fit into the general street scene; and ensure it is subordinate to the main dwelling. The scheme does not meet these aims.

10. In conclusion, the scheme by virtue of its design, scale, mass and bulk would not be in keeping with the host dwelling and would cause harm to the significance of Pirbright Terrace. Further, the proposal would not preserve the character or appearance of the Pirbright Conservation Area. The scheme therefore conflicts with Saved Policies G5 'Design Code' (1) and (2), HE7 'New Development in Conservation Areas', HE6 'Locally Listed Buildings' and H9 'Extensions to Dwellings in the Countryside' of the Guildford Borough Local Plan (2003). Further, I also consider that the scheme runs contrary to the SPG and Sections 7 and 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework.
11. The appellant has questioned the level of consistency of decision making, given other permitted developments within the terrace. I agree with the appellant that consistency is an important matter. Turning to the specific examples, I acknowledge that No 4 has a flat roofed ground floor extension / conservatory of a comparable width and depth to that proposed in this case. However, it does not have an extension at first floor level and does not accommodate a dormer window. This scheme in terms of its overall scale and bulk is markedly different from that currently at No 4. The appellant has also referred to the two-storey front extension of No 4, which the appellant considers is comparable to the two-storey part of the extension in this case, in terms of design ethos. Whilst this may be the case, the front extension of No 4 reflects the character and appearance of the front of the properties that form the terrace and in my view, appears suitably subservient. Further, this scheme includes a large ground floor part of the extension to the rear of the terrace and a dormer window. It is all of these elements in combination that results in the identified harm.
12. I accept that No 2 has a first floor gable projection to the rear, which is not dissimilar to that proposed in this case. However, I consider that No 2 has a very different built form to the rest of the terrace. This is because both No 1 and No 2 are orientated differently to the other properties within the terrace, as the gable ends created by their pitched roofs face on to the road. In addition, they are set further forward to the road. Consequently, No 1 and No 2 are not, in my view, read as part of the fairly uniform terrace, but viewed more as a standalone building. I consider that these examples are not directly comparable to the appeal scheme and do not therefore set any sort of precedent.

Other matters

13. I acknowledge that the scheme would not cause any harm to the living conditions of the occupants of neighbouring properties. However, this matter is not sufficient to overcome or outweigh the identified harm.

Conclusion

14. For the reasons set out above and having regard to all other matters raised, the scheme conflicts with the development plan, when considered as a whole. The appeal is therefore dismissed.

Jonathan Manning

INSPECTOR