

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 6 April 2017

by Martin Andrews MA(Planning) BSc(Econ) DipTP & DipTP(Dist) MRTPI

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

Decision date: 24th April 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/Y3615/D/16/3164311

8 Oxford Terrace, Guildford GU1 3RJ

- 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 J Hills against the decision of Guildford Borough Council.
 - The application, Ref. 16/P/01331, dated 21 June 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is the demolition of a rear lean to and the erection of a rear / side extension and railings to the front lightwell.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Preliminary Matter

2. The railings referred to in the above description of the proposed development have been deleted by amended plan ref. 728-1 Rev. A.

Main Issue

3. The main issue is whether the proposal would preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Guildford Town Centre Conservation Area.

Reasons

4. The Council accepts that the proposed side / rear extension would be modest in size and scale but is concerned that it would not be fully subordinate to the main dwelling. This is because it would continue the existing flank wall of the house rather than being stepped in.
 5. The term 'subordinate' is subjective and given the rearward setting of the proposed additions and their modest scale I would ordinarily regard the appeal scheme as fulfilling that description. However, whilst I have carefully noted the matters raised in the grounds of appeal I am minded to agree with the Council that within a conservation area the principle of a differentiation between the original building and an extension in order to visually preserve the historic plan form can be important.
 6. The appeal property is one half of a pair of Victorian semi-detached houses, which together with four other such pairs forms a particularly attractive street scene of symmetrical front elevations. This is clearly an important asset in the conservation area and whilst the appeal scheme is at the rear, which may well
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be much more varied, I consider it is buildings such as these where this principle should be applied.

7. The stepping in of the flank wall by one or two brick widths is less convenient and satisfactory for the appellant, but I am of the view that this requirement is not unduly onerous in order to ensure that the historic character of the conservation area is not incrementally eroded. I accept that in this case there is a fine margin between schemes that are acceptable and unacceptable, but as the Council points out, paragraph 5.1 of the Council's Residential Extensions SPG 2003 states that in sensitive areas particular care must be taken in the design of extensions to complement the character of the existing buildings. Furthermore, if I were to allow the appeal it would be difficult for the Council to resist similar proposals in Oxford Terrace and in other parts of the conservation area, with the overall and longer term effect being to diminish the significance of the conservation area as a designated heritage asset.
8. For the appellant it is argued that Policy HE7 of the Guildford Borough Local Plan 2003 does not apply to the proposal, but I am satisfied that the proposal would conflict with paragraph 1 of the policy as well as its overall objectives. The effect of this is that the proposal would not preserve the character and appearance of the conservation area.
9. Although in applying Government policy in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 I consider that the proposal would result in '*less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset*', I do not consider that this makes it acceptable. Nor do I regard the appellant's wish to have 'clean lines' internally and externally for the extension and any other associated benefits as being a public benefit of sufficient weight to outweigh the harm caused.
10. For the above reasons the appeal is dismissed.

Martin Andrews

INSPECTOR