
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 8 May 2017

by Tim Wood BA(Hons) BTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 1 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/L3625/W/16/3163463

Hill House, Furze Hill, Kingswood, Surrey KT20 6EZ

- 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 Giles Bendig against the decision of Reigate & Banstead Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 16/01795/F, dated 1 August 2016, was refused by notice dated 12 October 2016.
 - The development proposed is demolition of the existing roof to provide first floor offices over the existing retained ground floor.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this appeal is the effects of the proposal on the character and appearance of the surrounding area.

Reasons

3. The appeal relates to this modestly sized commercial building which is located on the east side of Furze Hill. The building is sited close to the front edge of its plot with its long elevation facing the front. It is constructed of brick elevations and a pitched, tiled roof. The roof design is of a hipped appearance but with part-gables on its upper section. Although it appears to be of single storey height, the submitted plans indicate that there is a small storage area at the first floor.
4. The appeal site sits within a mixed area, adjacent to but not within an employment area, a conservation area and a residential area. Depending on the vantage point, it is possible to see the existing building within the context of any of these different areas. The closest building is an estate agent's premises within the adjacent single storey building.
5. The proposal would replace the existing pitched roof with a first floor extension which would have a flat roof and rendered elevation. The submitted plans indicate that it would project very slightly beyond the ground floor elevations on all sides.
6. Being sited close to the road and pavement, I consider that the proposed extension would have a considerable visual impact here. The existing roof

structure is recessive and thus reduces the effects of its height whilst the proposal would appear harsh and immediate. I consider that it would have a considerably negative visual effect on the existing building making it appear top-heavy and visually awkward. The appellant compares it to the neighbouring estate agent's building; however, that is sited at a lower level, is of single storey height and appears to be of some age and so is not directly comparable with the appeal scheme.

7. I have taken careful account of the variety of buildings within the area, including the nearby commercial buildings. As I have stated, it is equally possible to compare the appeal site to the residential properties to the north and the public house to the west. My overall conclusion is that, in its particular position, the proposed extension would have a considerably negative effect on the existing building and the surroundings. Within this assessment I include the effects on the views wherein the appeal site is seen in conjunction with features that are inside the adjacent Kingswood Conservation Area, and in particular, the adjacent public house. In this respect I consider that the negative effects of the proposal would include some aspects of the experience of the Conservation Area from its surroundings. In these circumstances, I consider that the proposal would fail to preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area by having a negative effect on its setting.

Conclusions

8. I have taken account of all other matters referred to in the representations but I find nothing to outweigh my conclusions that the proposal would have an unacceptable effect on the character and appearance of the area in general and also on the setting of the adjacent Conservation Area. In respect of the latter point, I consider that the level of harm arising would amount to 'less than substantial harm' as set out in the Framework; in this respect there are no matters which can be considered as public benefits sufficient to outweigh this harm. Accordingly, the proposal is contrary to Policies Em3 and Pc13 of the Reigate and Banstead Local Plan and, consequently, the appeal is dismissed.

S T Wood

INSPECTOR