
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 30 May 2017

by Oliver Blower MA (T&CP)

a person appointed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

Decision date: 27 June 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/17/3172146

Rose Cottage, 10 Ashley Park Crescent, Walton-on-Thames KT12 1EX

- 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 Ms Erin Smiley against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/3719, dated 11 November 2016, was refused by notice dated 20 January 2017.
 - The development proposed is a rear and side extension of an existing two storey house with a room in the roof.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Background

2. There is a considerable history of planning applications to extend the property, most of which I take as read. The principle of extending the property has been established through earlier proposals, although a number of subsequent applications proposing similar schemes to that now before me have been refused, two of which were dismissed on appeal (Refs: 2015/3067; 2014/3942)
3. The proposal before me is an amended scheme following refusal of a previous application (Ref: 2015/3883) although the only alterations have been the use of a pyramidal style roof over the small first floor infill element as opposed to the hipped roof previously shown.
4. Since the submission of this appeal the Council has granted permission for a very similar scheme, which could be built (Ref: 2016/3718). The only significant difference from the appeal scheme before me is that it does not include the dormer elements to the rear projecting gable roof extension.

Main Issue

5. Although raised in representations, the Council has no objections to the effect of the proposal on the living conditions of the occupiers of the neighbouring dwellings. Based on the evidence and my site visit I find no reason to disagree and consider the one main issue in this case is the effect of the proposal on the character and appearance of the host dwellings and the surrounding residential area.
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Reasons

6. The appeal relates to a two-storey semi-detached house. The immediate area is characterised by a mixture of similarly styled detached and semi-detached houses with distinctive gabled and hipped roofs.
7. The development plan includes the Elmbridge Core Strategy (CS), 2011 and the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan (DMP), 2015.
8. Policy CS17 of the CS seeks to ensure, amongst other things, that development delivers high quality design which responds to the positive features of individual locations, integrating sensitively with the locally distinctive townscape.
9. Policy DM2 of the DMP seeks to ensure, in part, that all new development achieves high quality design; and that proposals should preserve or enhance the character of the area with particular regard to appearance, scale, mass, height, the prevailing pattern of the built environment and the character of the host building.
10. Further guidance is given in the Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This recommends that roof extensions should not dominate the roof by being over-large. It also discourages the use of flat roofed dormers.
11. The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) sets out that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, and that poorly designed development should be refused where it fails to improve the character and quality of an area.
12. As with the previously refused schemes the Council considers that the proposed extensions to the front and side of the dwelling would not be harmful to the general character of the host dwelling or surrounding area. The Inspector who considered the previous appeals reached a similar view. The main area of contention therefore concerns those elements of the proposal visible from the rear, and in particular the flat-roof dormer elements to either side of the proposed gable.
13. The proposed first-floor gable pitched roof, granted under separate permission, would be of similar scale to the hipped roof of the neighbouring two-storey rear extension, introducing symmetry of scale between the semi-detached pair. The proposed dormer extension, however, due to its flat roof, vertical planes and excessive size, would add considerable bulk to the gabled roof, unbalancing the visual relationship with the adjoining house. Moreover, due to its box like design, it would introduce a discordant feature, appearing contrived and incongruous when compared with the pitched roof of the original house and neighbouring houses. I accept that the proposed rear facing dormer extensions would not be readily visible from the street. However, they would appear very prominent in views from the rear gardens of neighbouring properties and the playing fields beyond.
14. As such I conclude on this issue that the proposal would materially harm the character and appearance of the host dwelling and the surrounding residential area. As such it conflicts with CS Policy CS17, DMP Policy DM2, advice in the SPD, and National planning policy in the Framework.

15. I note that many of the properties in the area have been extended to some degree, often significantly so, and I am also aware that permission has been granted for separate elements to the rear elevation. However, for the reasons above, I consider that the combination of elements proposed would result in alterations to the rear that would be harmful to the character and appearance of the dwelling and area.
16. I acknowledge that the dormer is intended to enable the roof space to be reached by staircase to provide accessible storage. Although such access may be convenient and of benefit to the appellant, it does not outweigh the harm the dormer extension would cause for the reasons given above.

Conclusion

17. Consequently, having had regard to all other matters raised, I conclude that the proposed development would have a harmful effect on the character and appearance of the host building and area. I therefore dismiss the appeal.

Oliver Blower

Appointed Person