

Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 19 June 2017

by Robert Parker BSc (Hons) Dip TP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 12 July 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/W/17/3171550

Warehouse, 47 Thames Street, Weybridge KT13 8JG

- 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 Mrs Michelle Jones of Wye Construction Services Ltd against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2016/3450, dated 20 October 2016, was refused by notice dated 21 December 2016.
 - The development proposed is excavate and construct basement below existing building with ramped access.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issue

2. The main issue in this case is the effect of the proposed development on the street scene within Thames Street.

Reasons

3. The appeal site comprises a warehouse which is located amongst housing within a predominantly residential neighbourhood. The surrounding area contains a range of building ages and architectural styles and this contributes to a mixed local character.
 4. The proposed vehicle ramp would serve a new basement parking area beneath the front part of the warehouse. It would slope steeply downwards from the back edge of the pavement to a point directly beneath the front face of the building, taking up just over half the width of the site frontage. The remaining land would be used as a pedestrian access walkway to the ground floor.
 5. The yard area forward of the building's principal façade is enclosed on either side by tall brick walls. These would hide the development on the approaches along Thames Street but they would not prevent localised views from directly in front of the site and from the dwellings opposite. From these vantage points the ramp would be highly prominent.
 6. Notwithstanding the cited example at Weir Court, some distance to the north of the site, subterranean parking is not characteristic of the area. The majority of residential properties have front gardens or driveways at road level. Given this
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immediate context, the ramp being proposed would stand out as a visually incongruous and discordant feature in the local street scene.

7. The appellant draws my attention to an earlier appeal decision for the site, within which reference is made to the area's mixed character as a reason for granting planning permission. I have not been given sight of the plans to which that decision relates, but it is evident that the Inspector's comments were made in the context of an entirely different proposal for new windows and a replacement roof. They do not justify the current appeal scheme.
8. Accordingly, I conclude that the proposal would cause material harm to the street scene within Thames Street. It would conflict with Policies CS4 and CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy (2011) and Policy DM2 of the Elmbridge Local Plan Development Management Plan (2015). These policies seek, amongst other things, to ensure that new development responds to local character.

Other Matters

9. Residents have raised a number of other concerns including in relation to highway and pedestrian safety, damage and disturbance to adjoining properties during construction and the effects of noise, vibration and fumes on the living conditions of neighbouring occupiers. However, based on the information before me and my own observations, these matters would not constitute reasons to dismiss the appeal.

Conclusion

10. For the reasons given above I conclude that the appeal should fail.

Robert Parker

INSPECTOR