
Appeal Decision

Site visit made on 23 August 2017

by D J Barnes MBA BSc(Hons) DipTP MRTPI

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

Decision date: 5th September 2017

Appeal Ref: APP/K3605/D/17/3176271

Willow House, 92 Winterdown Road, Esher KT10 8LT

- 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 Veronica Muir against the decision of Elmbridge Borough Council.
 - The application Ref 2017/0420, dated 7 February 2017, was refused by notice dated 13 April 2017.
 - The development proposed is the erection of side extensions and roof alterations including rear mansard and dormer windows.
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Decision

1. The appeal is dismissed.

Main Issues

2. It is considered that the main issues are:
 - (a) Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of the National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework) and development plan policy; and
 - (c) The effect of the proposed development on the character and appearance of the host property and the surrounding area.

Reasons

Whether the proposal would be inappropriate development for the purposes of the Framework and development plan policy

3. The proposed development includes extensions to an already altered property located within the Green Belt. Policy DM18 of the Elmbridge Development Management Plan (DMP) identifies that within the Green Belt extensions and alterations to a building will be permitted provided they do not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building. This policy is consistent with the Framework's approach albeit, unlike DMP Policy DM18, the Framework is silent about what scale of extension or alteration would amount to a disproportionate addition.

4. The Council has not objected to the scale of the proposed extensions, including cumulatively with the existing alteration, as being either inappropriate development within the Green Belt or harmful to the openness of the Green Belt. There are no reasons for me to adopt a different view to the Council. Accordingly, it is concluded that the appeal scheme would not amount to inappropriate development in the Green Belt and, as such, there would not be a conflict with DMP Policy DM18 and the Framework

Character and Appearance

5. The appeal property includes a central 2-storey element with a gable roof. Either side of this central element are 2-storey additions which are subservient in height and possess hipped roof forms. Although altered, the property generally retains a symmetrical appearance which is assisted by the fenestration, especially the front elevation when viewed from the drive.
6. The proposed development seeks to create a third storey to provide additional living accommodation sought by the appellant. The alterations to the property include an increase in the height of the side additions so that they would possess a ridge height similar to the central element; the erection of dormer windows with pitched roofs within the front roofslopes; a rear dormer with a recessed balcony and changes to the design of the rear roof.
7. By reason of its isolated siting, the property is not part of a cohesive streetscene which would be adversely affected by the appeal scheme. Further, views towards the property are limited by its distance from any public viewpoints and the intervening vegetation. Although the proposed development would add to its bulk and alter the roof's appearance, there would only be a limited change to the host property's contribution to the spacious and verdant character and appearance of the surrounding area.
8. There are some elements of the proposed development which would not unacceptably detract from the character and appearance of the property, including the erection of the gable dormers within the front roofslopes which would be aligned with the windows below. This approach is consistent with the Council's *Design and Character Supplementary Planning Document Companion Guide: Home Extensions* (SPD).
9. Further, particularly when viewed from the access drive, because both side additions would be altered in a similar manner the symmetrical appearance of the property would be maintained. However, when assessed cumulatively the scale and design of the appeal scheme would not be of high quality and would dominate and overwhelm the host property rather than be subservient.
10. Although the overall width of the rear roof would increase, the proposed dormer would still be a visually dominating and bulky addition which would be poorly related to the character and appearance of the host property, including taking into account the existing single storey extension. Although the rear roof form would be altered, the proposed rear dormer would also extend below the proposed eaves of the rear roof, not be set down from the ridge and not align with the existing openings. The size and siting of the proposed rear dormer would conflict with the design guidance in the SPD for

roof alterations and would not represent a high quality of development which respects the built form, character and appearance of the host property.

11. There would also be awkward juxtapositions between the various roofs, including because of the difference in eaves level between the central element and the side additions when viewed from the access drive. The use of matching materials for the proposed development would not address this harm.
12. The unacceptable harm which has been identified to the appeal property associated with the proposed development significantly and demonstrably outweighs the limited change to the character and appearance of the surrounding area and the lack of harm to the streetscene. Further, the desire of the appellant to increase the living accommodation has been carefully noted but this is also significantly and demonstrably outweighed by the harm which has been identified.
13. For the reasons given, it is concluded that the proposed development would cause unacceptable harm to the character and appearance of the host property and, as such, it would conflict with Policy CS17 of the Elmbridge Core Strategy, DMP Policy DM2 and the SPD. Amongst other matters these policies require development to be of a high quality of design, to take into account the scale, appearance and pattern of built development and extensions not to dominate or overwhelm the host building. These policies are consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework's core principle of securing high quality design. No specific conflict has been identified with CS Policy CS9 concerning development aspirations at Esher.

Other Matters

14. The lack of any objection from the Council to any harm being caused to the living conditions of the occupiers of neighbouring properties has been noted. Further, the concerns raised by neighbouring occupiers regarding the construction impacts of the proposed development have equally been noted. However, these matters do not alter the main issues which have been identified as the basis for the determination of this appeal. Accordingly, and taking into account all other matters, it is concluded that this appeal should fail.

D J Barnes

INSPECTOR